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Rev. J. B. Countryman.

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Born 1324. Died 1384.

LUTHER.

Born 1483. Died 1546.

PENN.

Born 1644. Died 1718.

CALVIN.

Born 1509. Died 1564.

BAXTER.

Born 1615. Died 1691.

WINCHESTER.

Born 1751. Died 1797.

WHITFIELD.

Born 1714. Died 1770

WESLEY.

Born 1703. Died 1791.

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A

SKETCH

OF THE

DENOMINATIONS

OF THE

CHRISTIAN WORLD:

ACCOMPANIED WITH

A PERSUASIVE TO RELIGIOUS MODERATION.

To which is prefixed an Account of

Atheism, Deism, Theophilanthropism, Judaism, Mahometanism, and Christianity,

ADAPTED TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

BY

JOHN EVANS, A. M.

Master of a Seminary for a limited Number of Pupils,
PULLIN'S ROW, ISLINGTON.

Seventh Edition,

WITH ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν την ἑνότητα τῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

London:

Printed by J. CUNDEE, Ivy-Lane,

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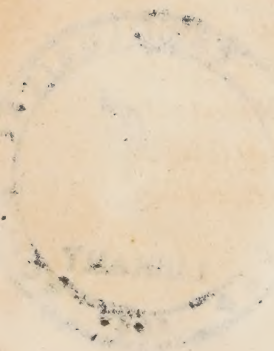

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TO THE SEVENTH EDITION.

THAT the AUTHOR *is gratified by the repeated editions of this little work, it would be affectation in him to deny; and he flatters himself that the circulation of* twelve thousand *copies (the number now abroad in the world) has contributed, in some degree, to extend the empire of religious knowledge and Christian charity. In the present edition, he has carefully availed himself of the latest communications, which he has received from respectable individuals of various denominations.*

From a letter written by a correspondent at Paris, he learns that the Sketch *is about to be translated into the French and German languages,*

under the superintendance of Messrs. Vos & Co. celebrated Booksellers at Leipsic. May its increasing circulation be the means of promoting a spirit of free enquiry, and the exercise of true liberality! We cannot in this imperfect state see just alike, with respect to the doctrines of revelation, but surely it is in the power of every *individual, acknowledging* the divinity *of the* SAVIOUR'S MISSION, *to cherish the kind and charitable disposition, for which* HE *was eminently distinguished, and by the cultivation of which temper, his* FOLLOWERS *will most effectually diffuse the triumphs of* GENUINE *Christianity.**

Pullin's Row, Islington,
June 1st, 1802.

* The substance of an article respecting the *Methodists*, which came from a respectable correspondent, but too late for insertion, will be found in page 213, by way of note to the *Reflections*.

*PREFATORY DEDICATION**

TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

TO

JOHN BRENT, Esq. Blackheath.

DEAR SIR,

AS a memorial of your friendship and patronage, I take the liberty of dedicating to you, this Sketch of *the Denominations of the Christian World*. When its first outlines were laid before you, you were pleased not only to sanction them with your approbation, but also to suggest many improvements. To other respectable friends, both among the clergy and laity,

* The author and proprietors of the *Sketch*, return thanks to the *Rev. Erasmus Middleton* for the readiness with which he consented to their taking likenesses for the Frontispiece, from his *Biographia Evangelica*, a work of extensive information, and well known to the public.

I profess myself under similar obligations; and am here proud of thus publicly rendering them my grateful acknowledgments.

With respect to the *present edition*, now called for by an indulgent public, it has (in compliance with the request of *most of my readers*) received considerable additions and improvements. Articles of some length are *newly* inserted, such as the *Theophilanthropists*, *Lutherans*, *New Methodist-Connection*, *Jumpers*, &c.; a few of the old ones have been re-written, such as the *Baptists*, *Methodists*, *Universalists*, &c.: and to the other denominations, particularly the *Quakers* and *Millenarians*, there have been accessions of matter, either explanatory of their tenets, or illustrative of their history. Notwithstanding my special aim at accuracy, yet in so miscellaneous a publication, it is almost impossible not to have fallen into mistakes. It is, however, sincerely hoped that they may prove of a trivial nature; for I have no interest to promote but that of truth, and *truth* does not require that the sentiments of any one man, or of any one body of men, should be misrepresented.

It may, nevertheless, be proper, Sir, through the medium of this address, again to remind the reader, that this *Account of the Christian World* (though now so much enlarged) is still professedly a *Sketch;* and that therefore an elaborate delineation must not be expected. It is intended, by its brevity, for the rising generation; more especially for the youth under my tuition, and for the young people who attend my public ministry. Accordingly in drawing up the work, I never imagined myself bound, like the ecclesiastical historian, to record every fact connected with the rise and progress of sects, or to pourtray minutely the shades of difference by which they are distinguished. I rather considered myself as occupying the province of the natural historian, who, when classing together the different kinds of the human race, attempts not to delineate every variation of feature, but holds up those more prominent traits of physiognomy, which are impressed on mankind throughout the several regions of the globe!

The purport of this little volume, Sir, is to inspire religious denominations with more re-

spectful sentiments of each other, and to lead them to study the benevolent ends, for which *the Gospel of Jesus Christ* was promulgated. Being a firm believer in the truth, and a fervent admirer of the excellence of the Christian religion, I would fain remove any one obstacle which impedes its progress, or diminishes its efficacy, where it is already known. Should, therefore, this *manual* bring only *two* Christians of different denominations to a more just knowledge of each other's tenets, and prove the means of inclining them the more cheerfully to exercise towards one another, that *charity which thinketh no evil*, it will afford me more real satisfaction than the publication of a work of the most pompous nature. It is observed by the late celebrated Edmund Burke, who possessed no inconsiderable knowledge of human nature, that "In all persuasions, the *bigots* are persecutors; the men of a cool and reasonable piety, are favourers of toleration; because BIGOTS not taking the pains to be acquainted with *the grounds* of their *adversaries' tenets*, conceive them to be so absurd and monstrous, that no man of sense can

give into them in good earnest. For which reason, they are convinced, that some oblique bad motive, induces them to pretend to the belief of such doctrines, and to the maintaining them with obstinacy. This is a very general principle in *all* religious differences, and it is the *corner-stone* of all PERSECUTION." The Emperor Charles the 5th, also, we are told, retired at the close of life to a monastery, and there, says Dr. Robertson, "he was particularly curious with regard to the construction of clocks and watches, and having found, after repeated trials, that he could not bring any *two* of them to go *exactly alike*, he reflected, it is said, with a mixture of surprise as well as regret, on his own *folly*, in having bestowed so much time and labour, in the more vain attempt of bringing mankind to a *precise uniformity* of sentiment concerning the intricate and mysterious doctrines of religion!"

The infamous falsehoods, Sir, which have been propagated by sects concerning one another's tenets, in almost every age of the church, are incompatible with *glory to God in the highest—*

on earth peace—good-will towards men. Nothing tends more to arrest the progress of true religion, than the implacable spirit of bigotry. Its arrogance and its folly are written in characters of blood. Wollaston, the learned author of the *Religion of Nature Delineated*, once asked a bigot "how many sects he thought there might be in the world?" "Why," says he, "I can make no judgment—I never considered the question." "Do you think," said Wollaston, "there may be an hundred?" "O, yes, at least," cried the bigot. "Why then," replied the philosopher, "it is *ninety-nine* to *one*, that you are in the *wrong!* This anecdote is introduced for the purpose of generating that modesty of temper, which forms one of the loveliest ornaments of Christianity. William Penn has, in a letter to Archbishop Tillotson, these memorable words—"I abhor two principles in religion, and pity them that own them. The first is obedience upon authority, without conviction; and the other, destroying them that differ from me, for God's sake. Such a religion is without judgment though not without teeth—

union is best if right—else *charity*. And as Hooker said—"The time will come, when a few words spoken with meekness and humility, and love, shall be more acceptable than volumes of controversy, which commonly destroy CHARITY, the *very best part* of TRUE RELIGION." Of the terms Prejudice, Bigotry, Candour, and Liberality, Dr. Aikin, in his *Letters to his Son*, gives this happy exemplification. "When Jesus preached, PREJUDICE cried, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?—Crucify, crucify him!* exclaimed BIGOTRY.—*Why, what evil hath he done?* remonstrated CANDOUR. And LIBERALITY drew from his words this inference—*In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*"

Upon my first sitting down, Sir, to this work, a closer inspection of the *discordant materials*, of which *the Christian world* stands composed, almost deterred me from proceeding to its execution. I, however, relied on the candour of the public, and was not disappointed. The most

respectable literary journals of the day, were pleased to sanction my attempt with their approbation. Socrates used to say, that the statuary found his figure in the block of marble, and striking off with his chissel the superfluous parts, *the form* presented itself gradually to view! In imitation of the sculptor, have I here endeavored to divest the several denominations of the extraneous matter which had been attached to them, either through ignorance or malignity; thus holding them up to the eye of my reader, in their just and regular proportions! Mine, therefore, has been an humble, though laborious province; but the concurrence expressed by the wise and good, even from among the most opposite sects, has proved an abundant reward. To use the words of Gilbert West, a most worthy member of the church of England—*Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.* An appellation infinitely more honourable than that of pastor, bishop, archbishop, patriarch, cardinal, or pope; and attended with a recompense infinitely surpassing

the richest revenues of the highest ecclesiastical dignity." Cyprian, likewise a pious father of the church, ranks a *contentious Christian* among the twelve absurdities, to which the Life of man is exposed.

Indeed, Sir, the flattering reception of this little work, by DENOMINATIONS of *every* description, cannot fail of affording me satisfaction. This circumstance, in conjunction with the extent of its circulation, (*many thousand* copies having been sold) has raised pleasing sensations in my breast. For it inclines me to hope, that the execrable spirit of bigotry is abating among all parties, and that the professors of Jesus are becoming more intent on the great essentials of Christianity. The probationary condition in which we are placed, powerfully inculcates such a conduct. It was a saying of the pious Richard Baxter, recorded by himself, in the *History of his own Times*—" While we *wrangle here in the dark*, we are dying and passing to that world, which will decide *all* our controversies, and the safest passage thither, is by *peaceable holiness*:"

Hence *jarring sectaries* may learn
Their real interest to discern,
That *brother* should not war with *brother*,
And worry and devour each other;
Shunning division here below,
That each in charity may grow,
Till join'd by Christian fellowship and love,
The church on earth shall meet *the church above!*

COWPER.*

Since the first appearance of the *Sketch*, leisure, Sir, has been found, to lay before the public the SEQUEL, being the *second* and *concluding* part of this work. *There* it is largely shewn, both in a preliminary Essay, and in the numerous Extracts, that MODERATION is the genuine offspring of Christianity. To avoid the imputation of partiality, the *authorities* amounting in number to *near one hundred*, are taken from divines of the Church of England—of the Kirk of Scotland, and from among the Protestant Dissenters. The drawing up of this latter work,

* The author embraces this opportunity of recommending *Exercises of Piety for the Use of Enlightened and Virtuous Christians*, by G J. Zolikofre; translated from the French edition, by the *Rev. James Manning*, of Exeter. The work, to which the translator has done justice, may be pronounced a truly valuable present to the rising generation.

(a *second* edition of which is just published) was with me a favourite object, and no small pains were bestowed upon it. The *Sketch* and *Sequel* complete my design on the subject. May the effort be attended with a divine blessing!

I am, however, aware, Sir, that for the same reason that the passionate charge the mild and unassuming with a *want of spirit*, zealots are reproaching the advocates of moderation with a propensity to indifference. But this is an iniquitous charge, since it is known, that liberal characters have been distinguished for their zeal, in support of what appeared to them to be the interests of truth. That the candid have fallen into lukewarmness, and that the zealous have been betrayed into persecution, cannot be denied; but surely no man in his senses will, on that account, seriously maintain that *candour* and *indifference*, *zeal* and *persecution*, are inseparably connected. Against a spirit of indifference, I here solemnly protest, nor indeed will any person accuse me of such an intention, who has attentively read my *Address to the General Baptists on the Revival of Religion* amongst

them. While with our blessed Saviour, Christians are exhorted *to love one another;* so on the other hand, with the apostle Paul, are they loudly called upon *to contend earnestly* (but not intemperately) *for the faith once delivered to the saints.*

Dr. Prideaux (a learned clergyman of the church of England) in his *Life of Mahomet*, speaking of the dissensions of the sixth century, remarks—"Christians having drawn the *abstrusest niceties* into controversy, did thereby so destroy *peace*, *love*, and *charity* among themselves, that they lost the *whole substance* of religion, and in a manner *drove Christianity quite out of the world;* so that the Saracens, taking advantage of the weakness of power and distractions of councils, which those divisions had caused, soon over-ran with terrible devastation, all the Eastern provinces of the Roman empire; turned every where their churches into mosques, and forced on them the abominable imposture of Mahometanism." From this lamentable fact, Sir, Christians ought to learn an instructive lesson. In an age *like the present*, when Atheists

and Deists are both in this country and upon the Continent, assailing on every side the venerable fabric of our religion, its professors ceasing to lay an undue stress on their *private differences of opinion*, should concentrate their scattered forces, and inspired with kindness towards each other, oppose with *one heart* and with *one soul*, the COMMON ENEMY!

The biographer of Bishop Burnet tells us, that when making his *Tour on the Continent*, this great and good prelate, "there became acquainted with the leading men of the different persuasions tolerated in that country, particularly Calvinists, Arminians, Lutherans, Baptists, Brownists, Papists, and Unitarians, amongst *each of which*, he used frequently to declare he met with men of such *unfeigned piety and virtue*, that he became fixed in a strong principle of *universal charity*." Would to God! that an example in every respect so illustrious, were devoutly imitated by the professors of Christianity. The good effects of such a conduct, would be instantaneously discerned. The sincere and hearty co-operation of Christians of *every* denomination, in the great

cause of virtue and piety, would essentially promote the best interests of mankind.

Nor will you, my dear Sir, blame me for thus venturing publicly to express the gratification I feel, in the republication of both *Sketch* and *Sequel* at Philadelphia in America. This extension of their sphere of usefulness will, I trust, prove the humble means of aiding in some small degree the cause of Christian liberality amongst our transatlantic brethren. The period is approaching, when the jealousies and distinctions of party in every quarter of the globe, shall be lost in the diffusion of pure and unadulterated Christianity! In the present awful crisis of infidelity and lukewarmness, Christians are apt to be borne down by a spirit of despondency. But the energies of their faith ought by no means to be exhausted. Over the attacks of its enemies, and over the infirmities of its friends, *the religion of Jesus* shall obtain a complete triumph. *The day of small things must not be despised.* Dispensations the most dark, and events the most unpromising are rendered subservient to the purposes of the divine government. The rays of

revealed truth which have hitherto only beamed upon us through the clouds of our ignorance and prejudices, are nevertheless ordained to light up the radiance of a more perfect day! THEN, to adopt the energetic language of ancient prophecy — *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den.* THEY SHALL NOT HURT NOR DESTROY *(saith the Lord)* IN ALL MY HOLY MOUNTAIN.

In the mean time, may the GOD of PEACE allay the animosities, and meliorate the temper of the Christian world! Thus will the wretched remains of bigotry, which are still to be found in some unhappy individuals of *every* party, be gradually lessened, and finally destroyed. The *glorious Gospel of the blessed God*, wants not any adventitious aid to extend its empire over the human heart. It is of *itself* sufficient (under

the blessing of Heaven) to purify our affections, and to prepare us for our certain and speedy removal into ETERNITY.

That you, my dear Sir, and *your worthy family*, to whom I am indebted for the first pupils with which I was entrusted,* may enjoy every possible blessing; and that *all* my readers (to use the words of my excellent friend, the Rev. H. Worthington, on a public occasion) may be "*candid, yet firm—enquirers, yet believers —pious, yet liberal,*" is the wish and prayer of

Your's, with great Esteem,

JOHN EVANS.

Pullin's Row, Islington,
April 8th, 1801.

* The *two* sons of *Samuel Brent, Esq.* of Greenland Dock.

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A

SKETCH,

&c. &c.

The great lesson which every sect, and every individual of every sect, ought to learn from the history of the Church is *Moderation*. Want of genuine Moderation towards those who differ from us in religious opinions seems to be the most unaccountable thing in the world.

Watson, Bishop of Landaff.

THE Christian world is divided into denominations, each of which is discriminated by sentiments peculiar to itself. To delineate the nature, point out the foundation, and appreciate the tendency of every individual opinion, would be an endless task. My only design is briefly to enumerate the leading tenets of the several parties which attract our notice, and to make this variety of religious opinions a ground for the exercise of moderation, together with the improvement of other Christian graces. The moderation here recommended, lies at an equal distance between an indifference to truth and the merciless spirit of uncharitableness. It is a virtue much talked of, little understood, and less practised.

But before we delineate the tenets of the several parties, we shall just notice the Atheist and Deist, two descriptions of persons frequently confounded together, and also give a general outline of Theophilanthropism and Mahometanism, of Judaism and Christianity.*

The *Atheist* does not believe in the existence of a God. He attributes surrounding nature and all its astonishing phænomena to chance, or a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Plato distinguishes three sorts of Atheists; such as deny absolutely that there are any Gods; others who allow the existence of the Gods, but deny that they concern themselves with human affairs, and so disbelieve a Providence; and lastly, such as believe in the Gods and a Providence, but think that they are very easily appeased, and remit the greatest crimes for the smallest supplication. The first of these, however, are the only true Atheists, in the strict and proper sense of the word. The name of *Atheist* is composed of two Greek terms, α and θεος, signifying *without God*, and in this sense the appellation occurs in the New Testament, Ephes. ii. 12. *Without God in the world.* It is to be hoped that *direct* Atheists are few. Some persons, indeed, question the reality of

* These topics will form a proper introduction to an account of the *Sects* and *Denominations* of the RELIGIOUS WORLD.

such a character, and others insist, that pretensions to Atheism have their origin in pride, or are adopted as a cloak for licentiousness. In the seventeenth century, Spinosa, a foreigner, was its noted defender; and Lucilio Vanini, an Italian, of eccentric character, was burnt, 1619, at Toulouse, for his Atheistical tenets. Being pressed to make public acknowledgment of his crime, and to ask pardon of his God, the king, and justice, he boldly replied, that he did not believe there was a God; that he never offended the king; and as for justice, he wished it to the devil. He confessed that he was one of the twelve who parted in company from Naples, to spread their doctrines in all parts of Europe. The poor man, however, ought not to have been put to death; confinement is the best remedy for insanity. Lord Bacon, in his Essays, justly remarks, that "A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to Atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may rest in them and go no farther: but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederated and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."

Archbishop Tillotson, speaking of Atheism, says, "For some ages before the reformation, Atheism was confined to Italy, and had its chief

residence at Rome. All the mention that is of it in the history of those times, the Papists themselves give us, in the lives of their own popes and cardinals, excepting two or three small philosophers, that were retainers to that court. So that this Atheistical humour amongst Christians was the spawn of the gross superstition and corrupt manners of the Romish church and court. And, indeed, nothing is more natural than for extremes in religion to beget one another, like the vibrations of a *pendulum*, which the more violently you swing in one way, the farther it will return the other. But in this last age, Atheism has travelled over the Alps and infected France, and now of late it hath crossed the seas and invaded our nation, and hath prevailed to amazement!"

The sermons preached at Boyle's lecture—the discourses of Abernethy on the Divine Attributes, and the treatises of Dr. Balguy are an infallible antidote against Atheistical tenets. This last excellent writer thus forcibly expresses himself on the subject:—

"Of all the false doctrines and foolish opinions which ever infested the mind of man, nothing can possibly equal that of Atheism, which is such a monstrous contradiction to all evidence, to all the powers of understanding, and the dictates of common sense, that it may be well questioned

whether any man can really fall into it by a deliberate use of his judgment. All nature so clearly points out, and so loudly proclaims a Creator of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, that whoever hears not its voice and sees not its proofs, may well be thought wilfully deaf and obstinately blind. If it be evident, self-evident, to every man of thought, that there can be no effect without a cause, what shall we say of that manifold combination of effects, that series of operations, that system of wonders, which fill the universe; which present themselves to all our perceptions, and strike our minds and our senses on every side! Every faculty, every object of every faculty, demonstrates a *Deity*. The meanest insect we can see, the minutest and most contemptible weed we can tread upon, is really sufficient to confound Atheism, and baffle all its pretensions. How much more that astonishing variety and multiplicity of God's works with which we are continually surrounded! Let any man survey the face of the earth, or lift up his eyes to the firmament; let him consider the nature and instincts of brute animals, and afterwards look into the operations of his own mind: will he presume to say or suppose that all the objects he meets with are nothing more than the result of unaccountable accidents and blind chance? Can he possibly

conceive that such wonderful order should spring out of confusion; or that such perfect beauty should be ever formed by the fortuitous operations of unconscious, unactive particles of matter? As well, nay better, and more easily, might he suppose, that an earthquake might happen to build towns and cities; or the materials carried down by a flood, fit themselves up without hands into a regular fleet. For what are towns, cities, or fleets, in comparison of the vast and amazing fabric of the universe! In short, *Atheism* offers such violence to all our faculties, that it seems scarce credible it should ever really find any footing in human understanding."

The arguments for the being of a God are distributed by the learned into two kinds: 1st. Arguments *à priori*, or those taken from the *necessity* of the divine existence: 2d. Arguments *à posteriori*, or those taken from the *works of nature*. Of the latter species of proof the above quotation from Dr. Balguy is a fine illustration. On the former see the great Dr. Clarke's Essay on the Being of a God, which has been deemed a master-piece on the subject.

Newton, Boyle, Maclaurin, Ray, Derham, Locke, and other philosophers, distinguished for the profundity of their researches, and the extent of their erudition, are to be enrolled amongst the

principal advocates for the existence and superintendance of a Deity.*

The *Deists* believe in a God, but reject a written revelation from him. They are extravagant in their encomiums on natural religion, though they differ much respecting its nature, extent, obligation, and importance. Dr. Clarke, in an incomparable treatise against Deism, divides them into four classes, according to the less or greater number of articles comprised in their creed. "The *first* are such as pretend to believe the existence of an eternal, infinite, independent, intelligent Being, and who to avoid the name of Epicurean Atheists, teach also that this supreme Being made the world, though at the same time they agree with the Epicureans in this, that they fancy God does not at all concern himself in the government

* On this subject the celebrated Lord Chesterfield made the following remarkable declaration; and no man can suppose *his* understanding to have been clouded with *religious* prejudices. "I have read some of Seed's sermons, and like them very well. But I have neither read nor intend to read those which are meant to prove the existence of God; because it seems to me too great a disparagement of that *reason* which he has given us to require any other proofs of his existence than those which the whole and every part of the creation afford us. If I believe my own existence, I must believe his: it cannot be proved *a priori*, as some have idly attempted to do, and cannot be doubted of *a posteriori*. Cato says very justly—"*And that he is, all nature cries aloud.*" *Elegant Epistles.*

of the world, nor has any regard to, or care of, what is done therein, agreeably to the reasoning of Lucretius, the Epicurean poet—

> For whatsoe'r's divine must live at peace,
> In undisturb'd and everlasting ease;
> Nor care for us, from fears and dangers free,
> Sufficient to his own felicity.
> Nought here below, nought in our pow'r it needs,
> Ne'er smiles at good, nor frowns at wicked deeds.

The *second* sort of Deists are those who believe not only the Being but also the providence of God with respect to the *natural* world, but who not allowing any difference between moral good and evil, deny that God takes any notice of the morally good or evil actions of men, these things depending, as they imagine, on the arbitrary constitution of human laws.

A *third* sort of Deists there are, who having right apprehensions concerning the natural attributes of God and his all-governing Providence, and some notion of his moral perfections also, yet being prejudiced against the notion of the immortality of the soul, believe that men perish entirely at death, and that one generation shall perpetually succeed another, without any further restoration or renovation of things.

A *fourth* and the last sort of Deists are such as believe the existence of a Supreme Being, to-

gether with his Providence in the government of the world, also all the obligations of natural religion, but so far only as these things are discoverable by the light of nature alone, without believing any divine revelation." These, the learned author observes, are the only true Deists; but as the principles of these men would naturally lead them to embrace the Christian revelation, he concludes there is now no consistent scheme of Deism in the world. Dr. Clarke then adds these pertinent observations, mingled with a just severity. "The Heathen philosophers, those few of them who taught and lived up to the obligations of natural religion, had indeed a consistent scheme of Deism as far as it went. But the case is not so now; the same scheme is not any longer consistent with its own principles, it does not now lead men to believe and embrace revelation, as it then taught them to hope for it. Deists in our days, who reject revelation when offered to them, are not such men as *Socrates* and *Cicero* were, but under pretence of Deism, it is plain they are generally ridiculers of all that is truly excellent in natural religion itself. Their trivial and vain cavils, their mocking and ridiculing without and before examination, their directing the whole stress of objections against particular customs, or particular and perhaps uncertain opinions or explications of opinions, without at

all considering the main body of religion, their loose, vain, and frothy discourses, and above all their vicious and immoral lives shew plainly and undeniably that they are not real *Deists*, but mere *Atheists*, and consequently not capable to judge of the truth of Christianity." But the present Deists are of two sorts only, those who believe, and those who disbelieve in a future state. If a *Theist* be different from a Deist, it is that he has not had revelation proposed to him, and follows therefore the pure light of nature.*

The term *Deist* comes from the Latin word *Deus*, a God; and is applied to the rejecters of revelation, because the existence of a God is the principal article of their belief. The name was first assumed by a number of gentlemen in France

* *Paganism* is the corruption of natural religion, and is little else than the worship of idols and false gods. These were either men as Jupiter, Hercules, Bacchus, &c. or fictitious persons, as Victory, Fame, Fever, &c. or beasts, as in Egypt, crocodiles, cats, &c. or finally, inanimate things, as onions, fire, water, &c. Upon the propagation of Christianity, Paganism gradually declined. Julian the apostate made an ineffectual attempt to revive it, and it is now degenerated into gross and disgustful idolatry. Such especially was it found to be in the South Sea Islands, lately discovered by that unfortunate navigator Captain Cook. Curious specimens of the Pagan idols may be seen both in the *Leverian* and *British Museums*. When I saw them there—the worshippers of such hideous deformity, excited my sincerest commiseration.

and Italy, who were willing to cover their opposition to the Christian revelation by a more honourable name than that of Atheists. Viret, a divine of eminence among the first reformers, appears to have been the first author who expressly mentions them; for in the Epistle Dedicatory prefixed to the second volume of his *Instruction Chretienne*, published in 1563, he speaks of some persons at that time who called themselves by a new name, that of *Deists*. Deists are also often called *Infidels*, (from the Latin word *infidelis*) on account of their want of faith or belief in the Christian Religion.* Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, was the first Deist who excited public notice in this country. Dr. Brown's recent edition of Leland's View of the Deistical Writers, together with many other valuable treatises, afford information concerning their principles, and contain a complete refutation of their objections against revealed religion. Mr. Belsham has thus well assigned the principal causes of modern infidelity in his reply to Mr. Wilberforce. "1. The first and chief is an unwillingness to submit to the restraints of religion, and the dread of a future life, which leads men to overlook evidence, and to

* Some have censured the application of the term *infidelity* to unbelievers, contending that in *our* language it is used solely in a particular sense, implying the want of *conjugal fidelity*.

magnify objections. 2. The palpable absurdities of creeds generally professed by Christians, which men of sense having confounded with the genuine doctrines of revelation, they have rejected the whole at once, and without enquiry. 3. Impatience and unwillingness to persevere in the laborious task of weighing arguments and examining objections. 4. Fashion has biassed the minds of some young persons of virtuous characters and competent knowledge to resist revelation, in order to avoid the imputation of singularity, and to escape the ridicule of those with whom they desire to associate. 5. Pride that they might at an easy rate attain the character of philosophers and superiority to vulgar prejudice. 6. Dwelling upon difficulties only from which the most rational system is not exempt, and by which the most candid, inquisitive, and virtuous minds are sometimes entangled. The mass of mankind, who never think at all, but who admit without hesitation, "all that the nurse and that the priest have taught," can never become sceptics. Of course the whole class of unbelievers consists of persons who have thought more or less upon the subject, and as persons of sense seldom discard at once all the principles in which they have been educated, it is not wonderful that many who begin with the highest orthodoxy pass through different stages of their creed, dropping an article or two every step

of their progress, till at last weary of their labour, and not knowing where to fix, they reject it all together. This to a superficial and timid observer, appears to be an objection to freedom of enquiry, for no person beginning to enquire, can or ought to say where he will stop. But the sincere friend to truth will not be discouraged. For without enquiry truth cannot be ascertained, and if the Christian religion shrinks from close examination in this bold and inquisitive age, it must and it ought to fall. But of this issue I have not the smallest apprehension. Genuine Christianity can well bear the fiery trial through which it is now passing, and while the dross and the rubbish are consumed, the pure gold will remain uninjured, and will come forth from the furnace with increased lustre."

Indeed the objections which some Deists have made to revelation, affect not so much the religion of Jesus Christ, laid down in the New Testament, as certain absurd doctrines and ridiculous practices which have been added to it by the weakness and wickedness of mankind. Reiterated accusations therefore of unfairness have been brought against the generality of deistical writers; and with this palpable injustice Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine stand particularly charged. Paine's *Age of Reason* has been ably answered by many writers, especially

by the present Bishop of Landaff, in his masterly performance, entitled *An Apology for the Bible.*

The rejecters of REVELATION (before they thoughtlessly calumniate it) would do well to consider what they are able to give us in its stead, better calculated to alleviate the distresses, and bind up the bleeding heart of humanity.

Dr. Beattie, in the eloquent conclusion of his Essay on the Immutability of Truth, speaking of Sceptics and Deists, very justly remarks:—" Caressed by those who call themselves the great, engrossed by the formalities and fopperies of life, intoxicated with vanity, pampered with adulation, dissipated in the tumult of business, or amidst the vicissitudes of folly, *they* perhaps have little need and little relish for the consolations of religion; but let them know, that in the solitary scenes of life there is many an honest and tender heart pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor, whom nothing but trust in Providence, and the hope of a future retribution, could preserve from the agonies of despair. And do they with sacrilegious hands attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny! Did it ever happen that the influence of their tenets disturbed

the tranquillity of virtuous retirement, deepened the gloom of human distress, or aggravated the horrors of the grave? Ye traitors to human kind, ye murderers of the human soul, how can ye answer for it to your own hearts? Surely every spark of your generosity is extinguished for ever, if *this* consideration do not awaken in you the keenest remorse." Some admirable strictures on the nature and prevalence of *modern* Deism, are contained in the present Bishop of London's Charge to the Clergy for the Year 1794.

Theophilanthropists, a kind of Deists, arisen in France since the revolution, and were lately in a flourishing condition. The name by which they stand distinguished, is a compound term, derived from the Greek, and intimates that they profess *to adore God and love their fellow-creatures.* Their common principle is a belief of the existence, perfections, and providence of God, and in the doctrines of a future life, and whose rule of morals is love to God and good will to men. Mr. John Walker, author of the Universal Gazetteer, has published the manual of this sect, from which a few particulars shall be here extracted.

"The Temple, the most worthy of the divinity, in the eyes of the *Theophilanthropists*, is the universe. Abandoned sometimes under the vault

of heaven to the contemplation of the beauties of nature, they render its author the homage of adoration and gratitude. They nevertheless have temples erected by the hands of men, in which it is more commodious for them to assemble to listen to lessons concerning his wisdom. Certain moral inscriptions, a simple altar on which they deposit as a sign of gratitude for the benefits of the Creator such flowers or fruits as the seasons afford, a tribune of the lectures and discourses, form the whole of the ornaments of their temples.

The first inscription placed above the altar, recalls to remembrance the two religious dogmas, which are the foundation of their moral.

First Inscription.

We believe in the existence of a God, in the immortality of the soul.

Second Inscription.

Worship God, cherish your kind, render yourselves useful to your country.

Third Inscription.

Good is every thing which tends to the preservation or the perfection of man.

Evil is every thing which tends to destroy or deteriorate him.

Fourth Inscription.

Children honour your fathers and mothers. Obey them with affection. Comfort their old age.

Fathers and mothers instruct your children.

Fifth Inscription.

Wives regard in your husbands the chiefs of your houses.

Husbands love your wives, and render yourselves reciprocally happy.

The assembly sits to hear lessons or discourses on morality, principles of religion, of benevolence, and of universal salvation, principles equally remote from the severity of stoicism, and Epicurean indolence. These lectures and discourses are diversified by hymns. These assemblies are holden on the first day of the week, and on the decades." Mr. Walker then adds, they multiply rapidly, and are exceedingly crowded. Mr. Belsham, in his answer to Mr. Wilberforce, speaking of this new French sect of Deists, remarks—"Its professed principles comprehend the essence of the Christian religion, but not admitting the resurrection of Christ, the *Theophilanthropists* deprive themselves of the only solid ground on which to build the hope of a future existence."

The concluding part of the *manual* of the

Theophilanthropists being still further explanatory of their tenets and conduct, shall be here introduced.—"If any one ask you what is the origin of your religion and of your worship, you can answer him thus:—Open the most ancient books which are known, seek there what was the religion, what the worship of the first human beings of which history has preserved the remembrance. There you will see that their religion was what we now call *natural religion*, because it has for its principle even the Author of nature. It is he that has engraven it in the heart of the first human beings, in ours, in that of all the inhabitants of the earth: this religion which consists in worshipping God and cherishing our kind, is what we express by one single word, that of *Theophilanthropy*. Thus our religion is that of our first parents; it is yours; it is ours; it is the universal religion. As to our worship, it is also that of our first fathers. See even in the most ancient writings, that the exterior signs by which they rendered their homage to the Creator, were of great simplicity. They dressed for him an altar of earth, they offered him in sign of their gratitude and of their submission some of the productions which they held of his liberal hand. The fathers exhorted their children to virtue; they all encouraged one another under the auspices of the Divinity to the

accomplishment of their duties. This simple worship, the sages of all nations have not ceased to profess, and they have transmitted it down to us without interruption.

If they yet ask you of whom you hold your mission, answer we hold it of God himself, who in giving us two arms to aid our kind, has also given us intelligence to mutually enlighten us, and the love of good to bring us together to virtue; of God who has given experience and wisdom to the aged to guide the young, and authority to fathers to conduct their children.

If they are not struck with the force of these reasons, do not farther discuss the subject, and do not engage yourself in controversies, which tend to diminish the love of our neighbours. Our principles are the eternal truth, they will subsist whatever individuals may support or attack them, and the efforts of the wicked will not even prevail against them. Rest firmly attached to them, without attacking or defending any religious system, and remember that similar discussions have never produced good, and that they have often tinged the earth with the blood of men. Let us lay aside systems, and apply ourselves to doing good. It is the only road to happiness."

The Christian reader will admire the practical tendency of this new species of Deism, but will lament the defects by which it stands charac-

terized. It wants the *broad basis* of revelation, which would give permanency to its doctrines, and energy to its precepts, beside the glorious discoveries of immortality! It was hoped that the profession of this system in France would have prepared the way for the reception of pure and unadulterated Christianity.

Judaism is the religious doctrines and rites of the *Jews*, who are the descendants of Abraham, a person of eminence, chosen by God, soon after the flood, to preserve the doctrine of the Divine Unity among the idolatrous nations of the earth. A complete system of Judaism is contained in the five books of MOSES, their great law-giver, who was raised up to deliver them from their bondage in Egypt, and to conduct them to the possession of Canaan, the promised land. The Jewish œconomy is so much directed to *temporal* rewards and punishments, that it has been questioned whether the Jews had any knowledge of a future state. This opinion has been defended with vast erudition by Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses;* but it has been controverted by Dr. Sykes, and other authors of respectability. The principal sects among the Jews, in the time of our Saviour, were the *Pharisees*, who placed religion in external ceremony—the *Sadducees*, who were remarkable for their incredulity; and

the *Essenes*, who were distinguished by an austere sanctity. Some account of these sects will be found in the last volume of Prideaux's Connection, in Harwood's Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, and in Marsh's improved edition of Michaelis.

The Pharisees and Sadduces are frequently mentioned in the New Testament; and an acquaintance with their principles and practices serves to illustrate many passages in the sacred history. At present the Jews have two sects, the *Caraites*, who admit no rule of religion but the law of Moses; and the *Rabbinists*, who add to the laws the traditions of the Talmud. The dispersion of the Jews took place upon the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus the Roman Emperor, A. D. 70. The expectation of a Messiah is the distinguishing feature of their religious system. The word MESSIAH signifies one *anointed*, or installed into an office by unction. The Jews used to anoint their kings, high priests, and sometimes prophets, at their entering upon office. Thus Saul, David, Solomon, and Joash, kings of Judah, received the royal unction. Thus also Aaron and his sons received the sacerdotal, and Elisha, the disciple of Elijah, the prophetic unction.

Christians believe that JESUS CHRIST is the Messiah, in whom all the Jewish prophecies are

accomplished. The Jews, infatuated with the idea of a *temporal* Messiah, who is to subdue the world, still wait for his appearance. According to Buxtorf, (a professor of Hebrew, and celebrated for rabbinical learning) some of the modern rabbins believe that the Messiah is already come, but that he will not manifest himself on account of the sins of the Jews. Others however have had recourse to the hypothesis of two Messiahs, who are to succeed each other—one in a state of humiliation and suffering—the other in a state of glory, magnificence, and power. Be it however remembered, that in the New Testament Jesus Christ assures us in the most explicit terms that *he* is the Messiah. In John iv. 25, the Samaritan woman says to Jesus, *I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak to thee am* HE. According to the prediction of Jesus Christ, several impostors would assume the title of Messiah; and accordingly such persons have appeared. An history of "*False Messiahs*" has been written by a Dutchman. Barcochab was the first, who appeared in the time of Adrian; the second, in 1666, was Sabbethai Levi, who turned Mahometan; and the last was Rabbi Mordecai, who was talked of in 1682.

The *Talmud* is a collection of the doctrines and morality of the Jews. They have two works that bear this name; the first is called the Talmud of Jerusalem; and the other the Talmud of Babylon. The former is shorter and more obscure than that of Babylon, but is of an older date. The Talmud compiled at Babylon the Jews prefer to that of Jerusalem, as it is clearer and more extensive.

The Jewish œconomy was certainly typical of the Christian dispensation in many important respects, but these types and antitypes have been wretchedly abused. A curious instance of this kind occurred about the time of the reformation. Le Clerc has recorded it; and the perusal of it must create a smile. The story is this: two eminent Protestants, a Lutheran, and a Calvinist had been wrangling a considerable time about the precedency of their patriarchs, without any seeming advantage; when the one took it into his head to make Luther the *antitype* of Aaron, seeing he was the first who had set up and lighted the grand *candlestick* of the reformation, in the tabernacle. The other not being able to disprove the fact, had recourse to the same *typical* reasoning, and affirmed that if Luther was Aaron's *antitype*, upon that score Calvin was much more so, since it is manifest that if he had not taken the *snuffers* in his hand

and snuffed the lamps, the *candlestick* would have given so dim a light, that few people would have been the better for it!

The most remarkable periods in the history of the Jews are the call of Abraham, the giving of the law by Moses, their establishment in Canaan under Joshua, the building of the Temple by Solomon, the division of the tribes, their captivity in Babylon, their return under Zerubbabel, and the destruction of their city and temple by the Emperor Titus. Their books of the Old Testament are the most ancient and authentic records extant. For further information respecting Judaism, many publications may be consulted. See the writings of Josephus, their famous historian, of which there are several translations in our language; Dr. Jenning's two volumes of Jewish antiquities, Dr. Shaw's Philosophy of Judaism, and Levi's Ceremonies of the Jewish religion.

I shall conclude this article of the Jews, with remarking that the indefatigable Dr. Priestley addressed them some years ago with spirit, and Mr. Levi, a learned Jew, has replied. An excellent *Address*, however, *to the Jews*, has recently come from the same pen, dated Northumberland, America, October 1, 1799. It concludes in the following pointed manner: "I formerly took the liberty to address you, and had

the happiness to find you were satisfied that I wrote from the purest motives, and a sincere respect and good-will to your nation. Having then advanced all that I thought necessary for the purpose, I shall not repeat it here. But I cannot help observing, that though one of your nation, a person whom I well know and respect, replied to me, he did not undertake to refute my principal argument, viz. that from *Historical Evidence*. He did not pretend to point out any defect in the arguments that I advanced, for Jesus having wrought real miracles, for his having died, and having risen from the dead. And if the gospel history of those facts be true, whatever may be objected to Christianity on other accounts, the divine mission will be unquestionable. God would never have suffered any person pretending to come from him, to impose upon your nation and the whole world in so egregious a manner as Jesus must have done, if he had been an impostor. Would God have raised an impostor to life, after a public execution? And yet in my discourse on that subject, I have shewn that this one fact has the most convincing evidence that any fact of the kind could possibly have. If you attentively consider the character of Jesus, his great simplicity, his piety, his benevolence, and every other virtue, you must be satisfied that he was incapable of imposture.

Compare his character and conduct with that of Mahomet, or any other known impostor, and this argument of the internal kind must strike you in a forcible manner. Besides how was it possible for such a religion as the Christian, preached by persons in low stations, without the advantage of a learned education, to have established itself in the world, opposed as it was by every obstacle that could be thrown in its way, if it had not been supported by truth and the God of truth? The unbelief of your nation in general, has answered an important purpose in the plan of Divine Providence, as nothing else could have given so much satisfaction, that Christianity received no aid from civil government, and that the books of your scriptures are genuine writings, not imposed on the world by Christians. But this great end being now completely answered by the continuance of your incredulity for such a length of time, I hope the time is approaching when, as the apostle says, Rom. xi. 26. *All Israel will be saved,* an event which will be followed by the conversion of the Gentiles in general. Your restoration cannot fail to convince the world of the truth of your religion; and in those circumstances, your conversion to Christianity cannot fail to draw after it that of the whole world!" In the *Spectator*, No. 495,

Addison has given an admirable paper on the history of the *Jews*, written with his accustomed ingenuity and piety.

[The *Chinese* religion is involved in great mystery. Father Amiot, after the most assiduous researches on the subject, comes to this conclusion:—"The *Chinese* (says he) are a distinct people, who have still preserved the characteristic marks of their first origin; a people whose primitive doctrine will be found, by those who take the trouble of investigating it thoroughly, to agree in its essential parts with the doctrine of the chosen people, before Moses, by the command of God himself, had consigned the explanation of it to the sacred records; a people, in a word, whose traditional knowledge, when freed from whatever the ignorance or the superstition of later ages has added to it, may be traced back from age to age, and from epocha to epocha, without interruption, for the space of four thousand years, even to the renewal of the human race by the grandson of Noah." The *King*, or canonical book of the Chinese, every where inculcates the belief of a Supreme Being, the Author and Preserver of all things. Their great philosopher Confucius lived about five hundred years before our Saviour's birth, and to this

day each town has a place consecrated to his memory.*]

CHRISTIANITY (to which Judaism was introductory) is the last and more perfect dispensation of revealed religion with which God hath favoured the human race. It was instituted by JESUS CHRIST, *the Son of God* who made his appearance in Judea near two thousand years ago. He was born at Bethlehem, brought up at Nazareth, and crucified at Jerusalem. His lineage, birth, life, death, and sufferings, were minutely predicted by a succession of the Jewish prophets, and his religion is now spread over a considerable portion of the globe. The evidences of the Christian religion are comprised under historical testimony, prophecies, miracles, the internal evidence of its doctrines and precepts, and the rapidity of its first propagation among the Jews and the Gentiles.—Though thinking men have in every age differed widely respecting some of the doctrines of this religion, yet they are fully agreed in the divinity of its origin, and in the benevolence of its tendency.

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* See the late Sir *George Staunton's Embassy*, where much information is given respecting their religion. Amongst other particulars, it is mentioned, that the *Chinese* have no religious establishment.

Brief representations of the Christian religion, shall be transcribed both from the writings of Churchmen and Dissenters, well deserving of attention.

Bishop Gibson, in his second Pastoral Letter, observes—" It will appear that the several denominations of Christians agree both in the *substance of religion* and in the necessary *enforcements* of the *practice* of it: that the world and all things in it were created by God, and are under the direction and government of his all-powerful hand and all-seeing eye; that there is an essential difference between good and evil, virtue and vice; that there will be a state of future rewards and punishments, according to our behaviour in this life; that Christ was a teacher sent from God, and that his apostles were divinely inspired; that all Christians are bound to *declare* and *profess* themselves to be his disciples; that not only the exercise of the several virtues, but also a belief in Christ is necessary, in order to their obtaining the pardon of sin, the favor of God, and eternal life; that the worship of God is to be performed chiefly by the heart in prayers, praises, and thanksgivings; and as to all other points, that they are bound to live by the rules which Christ and his apostles have left them in the holy Scriptures. Here then is a fixed, certain, and uniform rule of faith and

practice, *containing all the most necessary points* of religion, established by a divine sanction, embraced as such by all denominations of Christians, and *in itself abundantly sufficient to preserve the knowledge and practice of religion in the world.*"*

Dr. Sherlock (who succeeded Dr. Gibson as Bishop of London) expresses himself much to the same purpose in the first volume of his sermons. Observing that the books of the New Testament may be considered either as historical, as doctrinal, or as controversial, and some as a mixture of the two last, he thus proceeds:—"By the doctrinal I understand those matters of faith and rules of duty which do not regard this or that particular faith, but were intended for the use of the world, and are to continue to the end of it. And if there be a clear law, and clearly expressed in the world, this is the law. Can words more clearly express the honor and worship we are to pay to

* Some curious particulars respecting the religion of the *Hindoos* in the East Indies, communicated in the *Asiatic Researches*, seem to indicate that it is a corruption of the Christian religion. How far the resemblance holds, the reader of the Asiatic Researches must form his own judgment. That celebrated work was published under the inspection of the late Sir W. Jones. The reader should also consult Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*, in which performance the ingenious author discovers a profound acquaintance with oriental literature.

God, or can more familiar expressions be given in this case than are to be found in the gospel? Is not Idolatry clearly condemned in the gospel? Is there any thing relating to divine worship that we yet want instructing in? Are not the duties likewise which we owe to each other made evident and plain; and can there be any dispute about them, except what arises from lust, or avarice, or other self-interest? As to the peculiar benefits of the gospel, are they not declared without obscurity? Can you read the gospel, and doubt whether Christ died for you? Whether God will grant pardon to the penitent, or his assistance to those who ask it, whether he will reward all such in glory who continue the faithful disciples of his Son? What *other revelation* do we *want* or can we *desire*, in these *great* and *weighty* concerns; or what is there *wanting* to make up a *complete* system of religion?"

The immortal Locke also observes—"Whoever would attain to a true knowledge of the Christian religion, in the full and just extent of it, let him study the holy scriptures, especially the *New Testament*, wherein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, Salvation for its end, and Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." Even Rousseau, confessed himself struck with the majesty of the scriptures, the purity of the gospel, and the

character of Jesus Christ. See Gerard's Dissertations on the Internal evidence of Christianity, and also Dr. Craig's Life of Christ.

Many of the serious friends of Christianity are alarmed at the progress of Atheism and Deism, both at home and abroad. But let not the friends of truth be discouraged. That *revealed* (as well as natural) religion is encumbered with difficulties, has never been denied; and this with a considerate mind will be construed into a presumptive proof of its authenticity and excellence. "It would be a miracle (says Dr. Watson, the present Bishop of Landaff) greater than any we are instructed to believe, if there remained no difficulties; if a being with but five scanty inlets of knowledge, separated but yesterday from his mother earth, and to-day sinking again into her bosom, could fathom the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of *Him which is, which was, and which is to come—the Lord God Almighty, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever!* We live in a dissolute but enlightened age; the restraints of our religion are ill suited to the profligacy of our manners; and men are soon induced to believe that system to be false which they wish to find so: that knowledge, moreover, which spurns with contempt the illusions of fanaticism, and the tyranny of superstition, is often unhappily misemployed in magnifying every lit-

tle difficulty attending the proof of the truth of Christianity, into an irrefragable argument of its falsehood. The Christian religion has nothing to apprehend from the strictest investigation of the most learned of its adversaries; it suffers only from the misconceptions of sciolists and silly pretenders to superior wisdom: a little learning is far more dangerous to the faith of those who possess it than ignorance itself. Some I know affect to believe, that as the restoration of letters was ruinous to the Romish religion, so the further cultivation of them will be subversive of Christianity itself: of this there is no danger. It may be subversive of the reliques of the church of Rome, by which other churches are still polluted; of persecutions, of anathemas, of ecclesiastical domination over God's heritage, of all the silly out-works which the pride, the superstition, and the knavery of mankind have erected around the citadel of our faith; but the citadel itself is founded on a rock, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it—its master-builder is God; its beauty will be found ineffable, and its strength impregnable, when it shall be freed from the frippery of human ornaments, and cleared from the rubbish of human bulwarks."*

* This prelate has lately published two *Sermons* in defence of *Revealed Religion*, together with a *Charge*, well worthy of perusal.

The excellent Dr. Doddridge also thus happily expresses himself on the subject. "The cause of Christianity has greatly gained by debate, and the gospel comes like *fine gold out of the furnace*, which the more it is tried the more it is approved. I own the defenders of the gospel have appeared with very different degrees of ability for the work, nor could it be otherwise amongst such numbers of them; but on the whole, though the patrons of infidelity have been masters of some wit, humour, and address, as well as of a moderate share of learning, and generally of a much more than a moderate share of assurance, yet so great is the force of *truth*, that (unless we may except those writers, who have unhappily called for the aid of the civil magistrate in the controversy) I cannot recollect that I have seen any defence of the gospel, which has not on the whole been sufficient to establish it, notwithstanding all the sophistical arguments of its most subtle antagonists. This is an observation which is continually gaining new strength, as *new assaults* are made upon the gospel. And I cannot forbear saying, that as if it were by a kind of *judicial infatuation*, some who have distinguished themselves in the wretched cause of infidelity, have been permitted to fall into such gross misrepresentations, such senseless inconsistencies, and such palpable falsehoods, and in a

word, into such various and malignant *superfluity of naughtiness*, that to a wise and pious mind, they must appear like those *venomous creatures*, which are said to carry an antidote in their bowels against their own poison. A virtuous and well bred Deist must turn away from some pieces of this kind with scorn and abhorrence, and a Christian might almost be tempted to wish that the *books*, with all their scandals about them, might be transmitted to posterity, lest when they come to live, like the writings of some of the ancient heathens, only in those of their learned and pious answerers, it should hardly be credited that ever the *enemies* of the gospel in such an enlightened age, should be capable of so much impiety and folly."

From this paragraph, it would seemingly appear that good Dr. Doddridge had with a kind of prophetical sagacity, anticipated the publication of the *Age of Reason*, which by its boldness excited alarm; but which, on account of its misrepresentations and scurrility, may be ranked among the lowest of the deistical productions.

Finally, to use the words of the ingenious Mr. Clarke, in his answer to the question, *Why are you a Christian?*—"Not because I was born in a Christian country, and educated in Christian principles; not because I find the illustrious Bacon, Boyle, Lock, Clarke, and

Newton among the professors and defenders of Christianity; nor merely because the system itself is so admirably calculated to mend and exalt human nature, but because the *evidence* accompanying the gospel has convinced me of its truth. The secondary causes assigned by unbelievers do not, in my judgment, account for the rise, progress, and early triumphs of the Christian religion. Upon the principles of scepticism, I perceive an effect without an adequate cause. I therefore stand acquitted to my own reason, tho' I continue to believe and profess the religion of Jesus Christ. Arguing from effects to causes, I think I have philosophy on my side. And reduced to a choice of difficulties, I encounter not so many in admitting the miracles ascribed to the Saviour, as in the arbitrary suppositions and conjectures of his enemies.

That there once existed such a person as Jesus Christ; that he appeared in Judea in the reign of Tiberius; that he taught a system of morals superior to any inculcated in the Jewish schools; that he was crucified at Jerusalem; and that Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor, by whose sentence he was condemned and executed, are *facts* which no one can reasonably call in question. The most inveterate Deists admit them without difficulty. And, indeed, to dispute these facts, would be giving the lie to all history. As well

might we deny the existence of Cicero as of a person by the name of Jesus Christ. And with equal propriety might we call in question the orations of the former as the discourses of the latter. We are morally certain that the one entertained the Romans with his eloquence, and that the other enlightened the Jews with his wisdom. But it is unnecessary to labour these points, because they are generally conceded. They who affect to despise the Evangelists and Apostles, profess to reverence Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny. And these eminent Romans bear testimony to several particulars which relate to the person of Jesus Christ, his influence as the founder of a sect, and his crucifixion. From a deference to human authority, all therefore acknowledge that the Christian religion derived its name from Jesus Christ. And many are so just to its merits, as to admit that he taught better than Confucius, and practised better that Socrates or Plato. But I confess my creed embraces many more articles. I believe that Jesus Christ was not only a teacher of virtue, but that he had a *special commission* to teach. I believe that his doctrines are not the works of human reason, but of divine communication to mankind. I believe that he was authorized by God to proclaim forgiveness to the penitent, and to reveal a state of immortal glory and blessedness to those who fear God and work righte-

ousness. I believe, in short, the whole Evangelical history, and of consequence the *divine original* of Christianity, and the sacred authority of the gospel. Others may reject these things as the fictions of humour, art, or policy; but I assent to them from a full conviction of their truth. The objections of infidelity have often shocked my feelings, but have never yet shaken my faith.

To come then to the question—WHY ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? I answer, because the CHRISTIAN RELIGION carries with it internal marks of its truth; because not only without the aid, but in opposition to the civil authority, in opposition to the wit, the argument, and insolence of its enemies, it made its way, and gained an establishment in the world; because it exhibited the accomplishment of some prophecies, and presents others, which have been since fulfilled; and because its author displayed an example, and performed works, which bespeak not merely a superior, but a divine character. Upon these several *facts*, I ground my belief as a CHRISTIAN. And till the *evidence* on which they rest, can be invalidated by counter-evidence, I *must* retain my principles and my profession."

These extracts from *Sherlock*, *Gibson*, *Locke*, *Watson*, *Doddridge*, and *Clarke* have been here selected, because they serve to illustrate in a few

words both the nature and evidences of Christianity. Thus says an ingenious writer, the Reverend Robert Hall of Cambridge—"When at the distance of more than half a century Christianity was assaulted by a Woolston, a Tindal, and a Morgan, it was ably supported both by clergymen of the established church and writers amongst Protestant Dissenters; the labours of a *Clarke* and a *Butler* were associated with those of a *Doddridge*, a *Leland*, and a *Lardner*, with such equal reputation and success, as to make it evident that the *intrinsic excellence* of religion needs not the aid of external appendages, that with or without a dowry her charms are of equal force to fix and engage the heart."

It would, however, be as useless as it is impossible, to refer the reader to *all* the principal treatises which have been written at different periods for the defence and illustration of the Christian religion. But a few ought to be mentioned in justice to the subject; and those alone shall be specified which are easiest of access. The student may therefore consult *Lardner's Credibility*, *Watson's Theological Tracts*, *Priestley's Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, *Butler's Analogy*, and *Paley's* admirable *View of the Evidences of Christianity*, recently published. For the use of private Christians, *Doddridge's Three Sermons on the Evidences of*

the Christian Religion, are warmly recommended; also an incomparable little piece written by Dr. Samuel Chandler entitled, *Plain Reasons for being a Christian*, and an answer to the question, *Why are you a Christian*, by the late Reverend John Clarke, of Boston, in America, from which an extract has been given. This admirable compendium has been reprinted in this country.

In this age of infidelity and of dissipation, the minds of the young should be sacredly guarded against the errors and vices of the times. And solemnly doth it concern both ministers and parents, as they are accountable at the tribunal of Heaven, to furnish the RISING GENERATION with *religious* principles, which, by operating on the springs of human conduct, will ensure their temporal and their eternal felicity.

Mahometanism is the religion of *Mahomet*, who was born in 571, at Mecca, a city of Arabia, and died at Medina 631. His system is a compound of Pagansim, Judaism, and Christianity; and the Alcoran, which is their Bible, is held in great reverence. It is replete with absurd representations, and is supposed to be written by a Jew. The most eloquent passage is allowed to be the following, where God is introduced, bidding the waters of the deluge to cease.

"Earth swallow up the waters; heaven draw up those thou hast poured out: immediately the waters retreated, the command of God was obeyed, the ark rested on the mountains, and these words were heard—*woe to the wicked!*" Lust, ambition, and cruelty, have been deemed the most prominent traits in Mahomet's conduct; and Voltaire has written a fine tragedy on this subject. The great doctrine of the Alcoran is *the unity of God;* and the prophet propagated his religion by force of arms. Dean Prideaux hath largely proved, in his Letter to the Deists of the Present Age, that there are seven marks of an imposture, that these all belong to Mahometanism, and that not one of them can be charged on Christianity. See Sale's Alcoran, Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, Dr. White's Sermons at the Bampton Lecture, and Dr. Toulmin's excellent Dissertations on the internal Evidence of Christianity, and on the Character of Christ compared with that of other founders of religion or philosophy. Mr. Gibbon in his Roman History, gives the following curious specimen of Mahometan divinity:—"The sword (saith Mahomet) it the key of heaven and of hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, or a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer. Whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven at the day of judgment; his wounds shall be re-

splendent as vermilion, and odoriferous as musk, the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubims."

"I never wondered (says an ingenious author) that the attempts of Mahomet to establish his religion were crowned with success. When I peruse the Koran, and examine the materials of which it is composed; when I observe how much the work is indebted to the Jewish and Christian revelations; when I survey the particular part which Mahomet or his agents supplied; when I see with how much art the whole is accommodated to the opinions and habits of the Jews, Christians, and Pagans; when I consider what indulgencies it grants, and what future scenes it unfolds; when I advert to the peculiar circumstances of the times, when its authors formed the vast design of assuming the royal and prophetic character; and more than all, when I contemplate the reformer at the head of a conquering army, the Koran in one hand, and in the other a sword, I cannot be surprized at the civil and religious revolution, which has immortalized his name. With *his* advantages, how could he fail of success? Every thing favoured the enterprize. The nations beheld a military apostle. And they who were unconvinced by his arguments, trembled at his sword."

Having given this preliminary account of

Atheism, *Deism*, *Theophilanthropism*, *Judaism*, *Christianity*, and *Mahometanism*, we now proceed to the DENOMINATIONS in the Christian world. In the first ages of Christianity there were various sects which have long ago sunk into oblivion, and whose names therefore exist only in the pages of ecclesiastical history. It is not our purpose even to glance at these *ancient* sects, but only briefly to notice those which in the present day attract our attention. The most distinguished may be included under the following arrangement:—Opinions respecting the person of Christ; respecting the means and measure of God's favor; and respecting Church Government together with the administration of ceremonies.

I.

Opinions respecting the Person of Christ.

JESUS Christ being the medium by which the Deity hath imparted a knowledge of his will to mankind, the person of Christ has been eagerly investigated, and *the nature of God* rendered the subject of rude and unhallowed controversy. This has filled the religious world with violent contentions, nor are they likely to be brought speedily to a termination. In the mean time, it would become us to discuss this topic with great

modesty and humility. It is, however, my present province to state the existing opinions respecting this abstruse subject; it shall be done in a few words, and I hope with a degree of accuracy.

The *Trinitarian* believes the doctrine of a Trinity, by which is generally understood, that there are three distinct persons in one undivided Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The word *Trinity* is not to be found in the Bible, but is a scholastic term, derived from the Latin word *Trinitas*, denoting a three-fold unity. Calvin himself reprobates the term, as being *barbarous*, and of human invention. The most learned writers entertain such various and contradictory sentiments respecting this mystery, that it is difficult to know to whom the term Trinitarian is justly applicable. Waterland, Howe, Sherlock, Pearson, Burnet, Beveridge, Wallis, and Watts, have each of them separate opinions on this subject. Dr. Priestley, however, thinks Trinitarians reducible to two classes; those who believe that there is no proper divinity in Christ, beside that of the Father, and the class of Tritheists who maintain that there are three equal and distinct Gods.

Nearly allied to this latter class are the *Atha-*

nasians, a name derived from Athanasius, a father of the Christian church, who lived in the fourth century. The creed, which bears his name in the Common Prayer Book, is not of his composition; and so little attached was Archbishop Tillotson to it, that in writing to Dr. Burnet the historian, he says, "I wish we were well rid of it." The episcopal church in America has rejected it.—Were the account of the doctrine of the Trinity contained in this creed ever so just and satisfactory, yet its *damnatory* clauses are highly exceptionable, and have given great offence to some of the more sensible and worthy members of the established church. On this subject, Dr. Prettyman, in his *Elements*, speaks with candour and moderation—"Great objection has been made to the clauses of this creed, which denounce eternal damnation against those who do not believe the Catholic faith, as here stated; and it certainly is to be lamented, that assertions of so peremptory a nature, unexplained and unqualified, should have been used in any human composition." The prelate then endeavours to account for the introduction of such clauses into the creed; and then adds—"We know that different persons have deduced different and even opposite doctrines from the words of Scripture, and consequently there must be many errors among Christians; but since the gospel, no

where informs us, what degree of error will exclude from eternal happiness—I am ready to acknowledge, that in my judgment, notwithstanding the authority of former times, our church would have acted more wisely and more consistently with its general principles of mildness and toleration, if it had not adopted the *damnatory* clauses of the Athanasian creed. Though I firmly believe, that the doctrines of this creed, are all founded in Scripture, I cannot but conceive it to be both *unnecessary* and *presumptuous* to say, that "except every one do keep them whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Mr. Broughton, in his valuable *Dictionary of all Religions*, under the article Trinity, has the following explanatory paragraph, which may assist the reader on this most abstruse subject. "The doctrine of the TRINITY, as professed in the Christian church, is briefly this; that there is ONE GOD in THREE distinct PERSONS, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; *person* signifying here the same as *essence*, with a particular manner of subsistence, which the Greek fathers called *hypostasis*, taking it for the incommunicable property that makes a person. The *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, are believed to be three *distinct persons* in the divine nature; because the Holy Scriptures, in speaking of these three, so distinguish

them from one another, as we use in common speech to distinguish *three several persons*. There are many instances to this purpose, particularly the form of administering the sacrament of baptism, which runs, *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;* and that solemn benediction, with which St. Paul concludes his second epistle to the Corinthians: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, &c. And the *three Witnesses in heaven*, mentioned by St. John.*

"Each of these three persons is affirmed to be GOD, because the names, properties, and operations of God, are in the Holy Scriptures attributed to each of them. The divinity of the Father is out of the question. That of the Son, is proved from the following texts, among many others:—St. John says, *The word was God;* St. Paul, that *God was manifested in the flesh;* that *Christ is over all, God blessed for ever.* Eternity is attributed to the Son: *The Son hath life in himself.* Perfection of knowledge—*As the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father.* The Creation of all things—*All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* And we are commanded *to*

* This passage has for some time been thought an *interpolation*, and Dr. Prettyman gives it up in his *Elements of Theology*.

honour the Son as we honour the Father. The divinity of the Holy Ghost rests upon the following proofs, among others—*Lying to the Holy Ghost* is called *lying to God.* Because Christians are the *temples of the Holy Ghost*, they are said to be the *temples of God. His teaching all things*, his *guiding into all truth*, his *telling things to come*, his *searching all things, even the deep things of God*, &c. are alledged as plain characters of his divinity. Besides he is joined with God the Father, as an object of faith and worship in baptism and the apostolical benediction. This doctrine is called a *mystery*, because we are not able to comprehend the particular manner of existence of the three persons in the divine Nature." Dr. Jeremiah Taylor remarks with great piety, that "He who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, talking of essences and existences, hypostases and personalities, priorities in co-equalities, and unity in pluralities, may amuse himself and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk something he knows not what; but the *good man*, who feels the power of the Father, and to whom the Son is become wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is shed abroad; *this man*, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet

he alone truly understands the Christian doctrine of the Trinity."

It were well, if before we made up our mind on this intricate article of faith, we were carefully to read Dr. Watts's Essay on the Importance of any Human Schemes to explain the Doctrine of the Trinity. This essay shews, first, that no such scheme of explication is necessary to salvation; secondly, that it may yet be of great use to the Christian church; and, thirdly, that all such explications ought to be proposed with modesty to the world, and never imposed on the conscience.

Bishop Burnet tells us, that before the reformation it was usual in England to have pictures of the Trinity. God the Father was generally represented in the shape of an old man with a triple crown, and rays about his head! The Son, in another part of the picture looked like a young man, with a single crown on his head, and a radiant countenance. The blessed Virgin was between them, in a sitting posture; and the Holy Ghost, under the appearance of a dove, spread his wings over her. This picture, he tells us, is still to be seen in a prayer-book printed in year 1526, according to the ceremonial of Salisbury. Skippon also tells us, there is at Padua a representation of the Trinity, being the figure of an old man with three faces and three beards.

How contrary are these absurd representations of the Deity to the sublime declaration of our Saviour. John iv. 24. "God is a spirit, and they "that worship him must worship him in spirit "and in truth."

The *Sabellian* reduces the three persons in the Trinity to three characters or relations. This has been called by some a *modal* Trinity, and the persons who hold it *Modalists*. Sabellius, the founder of this sect, espoused the doctrine in the third century. Of his tenets, the accounts are various. Some say, he taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were one subsistence, and one person, with three names; and that in the Old Testament the Deity delivered the law as Father, in the New Testament dwelt among men as the Son, and descended on the Apostles as the Holy Spirit. This opinion gains ground in the principality of Wales. "The Sabellians (says Mr. Broughton) make the *Word* and the *Holy Spirit* to be only virtues, emanations, or functions of the Deity. They held, that he who in heaven is the *Father* of all things, descended into the Virgin, became a child, and was born of her as a *Son*, and that having accomplished the mystery of our salvation, he diffused himself on the Apostles in tongues of fire, and was then denominated the *Holy Ghost*. They resembled

God to the sun, the illuminative virture or quality whereof was the *Word*, and its warming virtue the *Holy Spirit*. The word they taught was darted like a divine ray, to accomplish the work of redemption; and that being re-ascended to heaven, as the ray returns to its source, the warmth of the Father was communicated after a like manner to the apostles. Such was the language of Sabellians."

Between the system of Sabellianism, and what is termed the *Indwelling* scheme, there appears to be a great resemblance, if it be not precisely the same, differently explained. The Indwelling scheme is chiefly founded on that passage in the New Testament, where the apostle, speaking of Christ, says—"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Dr. Watts, towards the close of his life, became a Sabellian, and wrote several pieces in defence of it. His sentiments on the Trinity appear to have been, that "the Godhead, the Deity itself, personally distinguished as the Father, was united to the man Christ Jesus; in consequence of which union or *indwelling* of the Godhead, he became properly God." Mr. Palmer, in his useful edition of *Johnson's Life of Watts*, observes that Dr. Watts conceived this union to have subsisted before the Saviour's appearance in the flesh, and that the human soul of Christ existed with the

Father from before the foundation of the world; on which ground he maintains the real descent of Christ from heaven to earth, and the whole scene of his humiliation, which he thought incompatible with the common opinion concerning him. Dr. Doddridge is supposed to have been of these sentiments, and also Mr. Benjamin Fawcet, of Kidderminster, who published a valuable piece, entitled *Candid Reflections concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity*.

The *Arian* derives his name from Arius, a Presbyter of Alexandria, who flourished about the year 315, and the propagation of whose doctrine occasioned the famous council of Nice, assembled by Constantine, in the year 325. Arius owned Christ to be God in a subordinate sense, and considered his death to be a propitiation for sin. The Arians acknowledge that the Son was the *word*, though they deny its being eternal; contending, that it had only been created prior to all other beings. Christ, say they, had nothing of man in him, except the flesh, with which the λογος, or *word*, spoken of by the apostle John, was united, which supplied the rest. The Arians, though they deny that Christ is the *eternal God*, yet they contend against the Socinians for his *pre-existence*. His pre-existence they found on the two following passages, among

many others:—BEFORE *Abraham was, I am.* And the prayer of Jesus—*Glorify me with that glory which I had with thee* BEEORE *the world began.* These and other texts of a similar kind, are in their opinion, irrefragable proofs that Christ did actually exist in another state before he was born of the Virgin Mary in the Land of Judea. This matter has been argued by various writers; and names of the first character have distinguished themselves in the Arian controversy. It has also been strongly urged by the advocates of Arianism, that the *pre-existent dignity* of Christ, accounts for that *splendid apparatus of prophecies and miracles*, with which the mission of the Messiah was attended. In modern times, the term Arian is indiscriminately applied to those who consider Jesus simply subordinate to the Father. Some of them believe Christ to have been the creator of the world; but they ALL maintain that he existed previous to his incarnation, though in his pre-existent state they assign him different degrees of dignity. Hence the appellation *High* and *Low Arian.*

That valuable practical writer Mr. Job Orton, though he never published any thing explicitly on the Trinity, is generally supposed, during the latter period of his life, to have entertained these sentiments of the person of Christ. He used to recommend the two following tracts, as having

given him the most satisfaction on the subject—*A Sober and Charitable Disquisition on the Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, by Simon Brown; and *An Essay towards a Demonstration of the Scripture Trinity*, by Dr. Scott. Of the system of Arianism, Dr. Clarke, in his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, Mr. Henry Taylor, in his learned work, entitled, *Ben Mordecai's Apology*, Mr. Tomkins, in his *Mediator*, and Mr. Hopkins, in his *Appeal to the Common Sense of all Christian People*, have been deemed the most able advocates. Mr. Whiston, the famous astronomer and translator of Josephus, revived this controversy in the beginning of the present century. Soon after, Dr. Clarke published his celebrated treatise, entitled, *the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, which was disapproved of by the convocation, and answered by Dr. Waterland, who had been charged with verging towards Tritheism. Erasmus (says the Encyclopædia Britannica) "seemed to have aimed in some measure to restore Arianism at the beginning of the 16th century, in his Commentaries on the New Testament. Accordingly he was reproached by his adversaries with Arian interpretations and glosses, Arian tenets, &c. To which he made little answer, save that there was no heresy more thoroughly extinct than that of the Arians. But Erasmus is known to have

been exceedingly timid in his disposition, and confesses in one of his letters to a friend, that he possessed not the spirit of a martyr. Of the truth of this declaration, there were many proofs.

Dr. Price, in his sermons on the Christian doctrine, has taken great pains in explaining and defending the principles of Arianism. He states at large the nature of the doctrine, and enumerates the advantages arising from it in the explication of the Scriptures. To these discourses, the reader is referred, and whatever he may think of the arguments urged in favour of that system, he must admire the truly Christian spirit with which they are written.

The history of the Arian controversy, during the present century, may be found in a pamphlet, entitled, "An account of all the considerable Books and Pamphlets that have been wrote on either side, in the controversy concerning the Trinity, from the year 1712; in which is also contained, an Account of the Pamphlets written this last year on each side by the Dissenters, to the end of the year 1719: published at London, 1720."

Thomas Emlyn, a pious and learned divine, should be mentioned here, since he has been rendered memorable for his sufferings in the cause of Arianism. He was a dissenting minister in

Dublin, and there solely persecuted on account of his religious sentiments. He rejected the common notions of a Trinity, but firmly maintained the pre-existence of Christ. He died in London, 1741, and his works were published by his son, an eminent counsellor, in three volumes; to which are prefixed memoirs of the author.

Some few Arians, and most of the present Socinians, add to their creed the doctrines of Necessity, Materialism, and Universal Restoration, though these tenets are by no means peculiar to them. Towards the close of this Sketch will be found an explanation of Universal Restoration: and some little account shall be here given of Necessity and Materialism.

The doctrine of *Necessity* regards the origin of human actions, and the specific mode of the divine government. Much controversy has there been on this abstruse subject. Collins, Priestley, Palmer, Price, Gregory, and Crombie, are authors who are distinguished in the controversy. The opponents of Necessity strenuously maintain, that it destroys all virtue and vice; whilst its advocates declare it to be the most consistent mode of explaining the divine government. It is not for us to determine, on so profound a subject, where the truth lies; and it is remarkable, that

he perplexity of the theme seems to have harassed *angelic* minds, according to the representation of the great Milton—

> Others apart, sat on a hill retir'd,
> In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high,
> Of Providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate;
> Fix'd fate, free-will, fore-knowledge, absolute,
> And found *no end*—in *wandering mazes* lost!

To short-sighted mortals, therefore, with all their boasted wisdom, the subject must appear dark, and in many respects unfathomable. The solution of such difficulties ought to be referred to a more enlightened sphere of being! Dr. Watts, indeed, thinks it probable that it will constitute one of the sublime employments of the blessed in the heavenly world.

The doctrine of *Materialism* respects the nature of the human soul, and the peculiar mode of its existence. All materialists deny an intermediate state of consciousness between death and the resurrection. Drs. Price and Priestley had a friendly correspondence on this article; and though Dr. Price was no materialist, yet he did not hold with an intermediate state. Those who deny the existence of an intermediate state, are often called *Soul-sleepers*. See Archdeacon Blackburn's *Historical View of this Contro-*

versy, and Dr. Law's *Appendix* to his *Theory of Natural and Revealed Religion. The Light of Nature Pursued*, by Edward Search, Esq. is a very curious work relative to this subject. It contains ingenious illustrations: the author's real name was Tucker; he died in 1775.

Had not Necessity and Materialism been more of a philosophical than of a theological nature, they should have received a minuter explication.

The *Socinian* takes his name from Faustus Socinus, who died in Poland 1604. There were two who bore the name Socinus, uncle and nephew, and both disseminated the same doctrine. The Socinian asserts, that Christ had no existence until born of the Virgin Mary; and that, being a man like ourselves, though endowed with a large portion of the divine wisdom, the only objects of his mission were to teach the efficacy of repentance without an atonement, as a medium of the divine favour—to exhibit an example for our imitation—to seal his doctrine with his blood—and, in his resurrection from the dead, to indicate the certainty of our resurrection at the last day. The *simple humanity* of Christ, which forms a principal article of their creed, is founded on passages of Scripture, where the Messiah is spoken of as a MAN, particularly the following: 2 Acts xxii. *Ye men of Israel hear these words*,

Jesus of Nazareth a MAN, *approved of God among you*, &c.—17 Acts xxxi. *Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that* MAN, *whom he hath ordained*, &c.—1 Tim. ii. v. *There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the* MAN *Christ Jesus*—At the same time it must be acknowledged that neither the Trinitarian, nor Sabellian, nor Arian deny his humanity; though they do not hold it in that exclusive and simple sense of the word, for which the Socinian contends. On this account it is, that the Socinians have received on some occasions, the appellation of *Humanitarians*.

Between ancient and modern Socinians, however, a considerable difference obtains. The miraculous conception, and the worship of Christ, both allowed by Socinus, are rejected by most of the modern Socinians. Dr. Priestley distinguished himself in a controversy on this subject with Dr. Horsley, the present Bishop of Rochester. Dr. Priestley had published his two principal theological works; the one to prove the first Christians Unitarians, entitled, *The History of Early Opinions*; the other to account for the origin and spread of what is commonly called the orthodox doctrine, entitled, *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. On one or both of these publications, the Bishop severely animad-

verted; and to these animadversions Dr. Priestley made several spirited replies. It is difficult to trace the origin of the Socinian controversy. John Campanus is said to be the first of the reformers who distinguished himself on this side of the question. Next Michael Servetus, a Spanish physician, whom Calvin persecuted even to death; for in the year 1553 he was committed to the flames, by persons who had themselves just escaped the fangs of the Romish church, and who at least had nominally erected the standard of religious liberty. "It is impossible (says Dr. Maclaine) to justify the conduct of Calvin in the case of Servetus, whose death will be an indelible reproach upon the character of that eminent reformer. The only thing that can be alledged, not to deface, but to diminish his crime is, that it was no easy matter for him to divest himself at once of that persecuting spirit which had been so long nourished and strengthened by the Popish religion, in which he was educated. It was a remaining portion of the spirit of popery in the breast of Calvin, that kindled his unchristian zeal against the wretched Servetus."

The Socinians flourished greatly in Poland about the year 1551; and J. Siemienius, Palatine of Podolia, built purposely for their use the city of Racow. A famous cathechism was published by them, called the Racovian Catechism; and

their most able writers are known among the learned by the title of the *Polones Fratres*, or Polonian Brethren. "Their writings were (says Dr. Maclaine) republished together in the year 1656, in one great collection, consisting of six volumes in folio, under the title of *Bibliotheca Fratrum*. There are, indeed, in this collection, many pieces wanting, which were composed by the most eminent leaders of the sect; but what is there published, is nevertheless sufficient to give the attentive reader a clear idea of the doctrine of the Socinians, and of the nature of their institution, as a religious community." An interesting account of these several authors, will be found in *Dr. Toulmin's Life of Socinus.* Having mentioned the persecution of Servetus by Calvin, truth, on the other hand, requires it to be mentioned that Socinus has been accused of persecuting one Francis David, who, on account of his rejecting the worship of Christ, was cast into prison, where he died. The persecuting spirit, discoverable in some of the reformers, diminishes the respectability of their characters, and the only apology that can be made for them is, what has been already mentioned, that the nature and foundation of religious liberty were not then fully understood.

But the Socinians have appropriated to themselves the appellation of *Unitarians;* and by

this name they are now more generally distinguished. Though to this appellation they have no *exclusive* claim, yet it is somewhat more correctly descriptive of their religious tenets than that of Socinians, since they renounce many of the opinions of Socinus. The Arians, if not the Trinitarians, are equally strenuous for the divine Unity. See Lindsey's *Historical View of Unitarianism*, Dr. Toulmin's *Life of Socinus*, Hopton Hayne's *Scripture Account of the Attributes and Worship of God, and of the Character and Offices of Jesus Christ*, and Mr. Belsham's *Answer to Mr. Wilberforce*, where the modern Socinian tenets are stated and defended with ability.

The Trinitarians, Arians, and Socinians, have also differed greatly respecting the *personality* of the Holy Spirit. Much has been said on both sides of this intricate and controverted question. Dr. Lardner's *Letter on the Logos* may be consulted, and also Mr. Marsom's little piece, entitled, *the Impersonality of the Holy Ghost*, published in 1787. In *Doddridge's Lectures* much information is given respecting this and almost every other article of the Christian faith. Dr. Kippis, not long before his death, published an edition of this valuable work, with considerable additions and improvements. The private Christian as well as the theological student, will

derive an extensive knowledge from the attentive perusal of it.

A note added to this publication by Dr. Kippis, and applicable to this *first* division of religious opinions, is of so excellent a nature, that I am tempted to transcribe it. "When it is considered, how extremely difficult many questions in themselves are, and what different conclusions have been drawn concerning them by men of the profoundest knowledge and deepest reflection, there is a *modest scepticism*, which it will become young students to preserve, till time shall have given them the opportunity of wider enquiry and larger observation. This remark would not have been made, if instances had not occurred of youth who have eagerly, and even arrogantly adopted an hypothesis on one side or the other, without sufficiently exercising that patience of thinking, and that slow progress of examination, which are likely to be the most favourable to the acquisition of truth."

II.

Opinions respecting the Means and Measure of God's Favor.

HAVING ascertained the person of Christ—whether he be the *eternal God*—or *an Angel*—having an existence previous to his being born of

the Virgin Mary—or a *mere Man*, under the guidance of inspiration—Christians next proceed to consider the *extent* of the blessings of the gospel, and the *manner* in which they have been conveyed to us. This circumstance also, has been the source of endless contentions. Peace and charity have been not unfrequently lost in the discussion of the subject. Even the methodists themselves split into two great parties concerning it; and the controversy between their respective leaders has scarcely subsided. We shall attempt the delineation of this class of opinions with brevity.

The *Calvinist* adheres to the doctrines which Calvin taught at Geneva, about 1540. The tenets of Calvinism are predestination, original sin, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. These, in the learned world, are termed *the five points*; and frequent have been the controversies agitated respecting them. As the Calvinists differ among themselves in the explication of these tenets, it would be difficult to give a specific account of them. Generally speaking, however, they comprehend the following propositions: 1st. That God has chosen a certain number in Christ to everlasting glory, before the foundation of the world, according to his immutable purpose, and of his free grace and love, without the least fore-sight of faith, good

works, or any conditions performed by the creature; and that the rest of mankind he was pleased to pass by, and ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his vindictive justice. 2dly. That Jesus Christ by his death and sufferings, made an atonement only for the sins of the elect. 3dly. That mankind are totally depraved in consequence of the fall; and, by virtue of Adam's being their public head, the guilt of his sin was imputed, and a corrupt nature conveyed to all his posterity, from which proceed all actual transgressions; and that by sin we are made subject to death, and all miseries temporal, spiritual, and eternal. 4thly. That all whom God has *predestinated* to life he is pleased in his appointed time effectually to call by his word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. And, 5thly. That those whom God has effectually called and sanctified by his spirit shall never finally fall from a state of grace. Some have supposed that the Trinity was one of these five points; but this is a mistake, since both the Calvinists and the Arminians, who formed the synod of Dort (where this phrase, *five points*, originated) were on the article of the Trinity generally agreed. The most prominent feature of this system is the election

of some, and the reprobation of others, from all eternity.

The Calvinists found their sentiments of election on the expressions of the Saviour, respecting his having *chosen* his disciples *out of the world;* and more particularly on certain terms used by the apostle Paul, in his *Epistle to the Romans.* To the Epistolatory writings, indeed, they more frequently refer than to any other part of the New Testament. The chief advantage of this system, in the opinion of its advocates is, to produce in us a *most reverential awe* when we look up to God, and the *profoundest humility* when we look down upon ourselves.

To the Calvinists also belongs more particularly the doctrine of an atonement, or that Christ, by his death, made satisfaction to the divine justice for the elect, appeasing the anger of the Divine Being, and effecting on his part a reconciliation. Thus Jesus Christ had the sin of the elect laid upon him; and in this sense, Luther said that JESUS CHRIST was the *greatest sinner* in the world!!! This doctrine, however, is differently explained by their divines, and some consider it (with the Arians and Sabellians) as simply a medium through which God has been pleased to exercise mercy towards the penitent. See Mr. Fuller's publication, entitled, *The Cal-*

*vinistic and Socinian Systems compared,** which has been admired by some of the Calvinists, and condemned by others of them, as not coming up to the *full standard* of orthodoxy.

But to ascertain the real sentiments of this body of Christians, recourse should be had to the Assembly's Catechism, which is taught their children, and may therefore be supposed to contain a just account of their religious opinions.

Among the refinements of Calvinism are to be ranked the distinctions of the *Sublapsarians* and *Supralapsarians*. The Sublapsarians assert, that

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* Having referred to this publication, it may be proper to observe, that it treats of the Calvinistic system, and endeavours to defend it from the absurdities and impieties with which it has been charged in the writings of modern Socinians. Accordingly Dr. Toulmin and Mr. Kentish have come forward and bestowed upon it some animadversions, to which their antagonist has replied. Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, indeed, against whom Mr. F.'s criticisms are chiefly directed, have treated it in a different manner. The former has not deemed it worthy of notice; the latter mentions it in his reply to Mr. Wilberforce, with great contempt He there remarks, that the amount of its boasted argument is this—"We Calvinists being *much better Christians* than you Socinians, our doctrine *must* be true!" So very different and even contradictory are the estimates made of mere controversial publications. Dr. Toulmin has lately published a *second* and enlarged edition of his piece against it, so that the dispute between them is at present far from being decided.

God had only permitted the first man to fall into transgression, without absolutely pre-determining his fall: whereas the Supralapsarians maintain, that God had from all eternity decreed the transgressions of Adam, in such a manner that our first parents, could not possibly avoid this fatal event. Dr. Doddridge in his Lectures, has thus stated these abstruse distinctions—"The *Supralapsarian* and *Sublapsarian* schemes agree in asserting the doctrine of predestination, but with this difference, that the *former* supposes that God intended to glorify his justice in the condemnation of some, as well as his mercy in the salvation of others, and for that purpose decreed that *Adam* should necessarily fall, and by that fall bring himself and all his offspring into a state of everlasting condemnation: the *latter* scheme supposes that the decree of predestination regards man as fallen by an abuse of that freedom which Adam had, into a state in which all were to be left to necessary and unavoidable ruin, who were not exempted from it by predestination." Recent divines, who have gone to the height of *Supra-lapsarians*, are Mr. *Brine* and Dr. *Gill*. Were any thing more necessary to elucidate this curious subject, it might be added—that the term Supralapsarians is derived from two Latin words, *Supra* above, and *lapsus* the fall; and the

term Sublapsarians, from *Sub* below or after, and *lapsus* the fall.

Calvin, in his *Institutes*, states and defends at large, the principles of his system. It is written in elegant Latin, is dedicated to Francis the First, King of France, and the dedication has been admired for its boldness and magnanimity.

For a defence of Calvinism, see Edwards *on the Will*, Brine's *Tracts*, Dr. Gill's *Cause of God and Truth*, and Toplady's *Historic Proof of the Calvinism of the Church of England.*

The *Arminian* favours the tenets of Arminius, the disciple of Beza, and latterly an eminent professor of divinity at Leyden, who flourished about the year 1600. Thinking the doctrine of Calvin with regard to free-will, predestination, and grace, directly contrary to the mild and amiable perfections of the Deity, he began to express his doubts concerning them in the year 1591; and upon further enquiry, adopted sentiments more nearly resembling those of the Lutherans than of the Calvinists. After his appointment to the theological chair at Leyden, he thought it his duty to avow and vindicate the principles which he had embraced; and the freedom with which he published and defended them, exposed him to the resentment of those that adhered to the theological system of Geneva. The controversy

thus begun in the life-time of Arminius, ended not with his death, and for a long time roused the violence of contending passions.* His tenets include the five following propositions: 1st. That God has not fixed the future state of mankind by an absolute unconditional decree; but determined from all eternity, to bestow salvation on those whom he foresaw would persevere to the end in their faith in Jesus Christ, and to inflict punishment on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist to the end his divine assistance. 2ndly. That Jesus Christ, by his death and sufferings, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that however none but those who believe in him can be partakers of this divine benefit. 3dly. That mankind are not totally depraved, and that depravity does not come upon them by virtue of Adam's being their public head, but that mortality and natural evil only are the direct consequences of his sin to posterity. 4thly. That there is no such thing as irresistible grace, in the conversion of sinners. And, 5thly. That those who are united to Christ by faith, may fall from their faith, and forfeit finally their state of grace. Thus the followers of Arminius believe

* Arminius's motto was a remarkable one.—"*A good conscience is a paradise!*"

that God, having an *equal* regard for all his creatures, sent his Son to die for the sins of the *whole world;* that men have the power of doing the will of God, otherwise they are not the proper subjects of approbation and condemnation; and that, in this present imperfect state, believers, if not peculiarly vigilant, may, through the force of temptation, fall from grace, and sink into final perdition. The Arminians found their sentiments on the expressions of our SAVIOUR respecting his *willingness* to save *all* that come unto him; especially on his pathetic prayer over Jerusalem—his Sermon on the mount, and above all on his delineation of the process of the last day, where the salvation of men is not said to have been procured by any *decree*, but because they had done *the will of their Father, who is in heaven.* This last argument they deem decisive; because it cannot be supposed that Jesus, in the account of the judgment day, would have deceived them. They also say, the terms in the *Romans* respecting election, are applicable only to the state of the Jews *as a body*, without a reference to the religious condition of individuals, either in the present or future world.

Whitby, the celebrated commentator, and who was originally a *Calvinist*, has written a large and elaborate defence of Arminianism; and the

reader should consult Dr. Taylor's *Key to the Epistle to the Romans*, which has been much admired, on the subject. Since the days of Laud (who was Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Charles the First) by far the majority of the English clergy have taken this side of the question. Bishop Burnet has given a full account of the opinions of this sect, in his *Exposition* of the Seventeenth Article.

In the last century disputes ran very high in Holland between the Calvinists and the Arminians. On each side considerable talents and learning were displayed; but some shamefully called in the interference of the civil power, and thus terminated a controversy, which for some years had agitated the religious world. For this purpose the famous synod of Dort was held, 1618, and a curious account of its proceedings may be seen in a series of letters written by the ever-memorable John Hales, who was present on the occasion. This synod was succeeded by a severe and scandalous persecution of the Arminians. The respectable Barnevelt lost his head on a scaffold, and the learned Grotius, condemned to perpetual imprisonment, fled and took refuge in France. The storm, however, some time after abated, and Episcopius, an Arminian minister, opened a seminary in Amsterdam,

which produced some able divines and excellent scholars.

The principal Arminian writers are Episcopius, Vorstius, Grotius, Limborch, Le Clerc, Wetstein, not to mention many others of modern times, particularly Mr. John Wesley in his *Arminian Magazine*, and Mr. Fellowes in his *Religion without Cant*, and in his elegant work, entitled, *Christian Philosophy*.

The Arminians are sometimes called the Remonstrants, because they, in 1611, presented a REMONSTRANCE to the States General, wherein they pathetically state their grievances, and pray for relief. See an interesting work, entitled, An Abridgement of Gerrard Brandt's History of the Reformation in the Low Countries, 2 vols. 8vo.

The *Baxterian* strikes into a middle path, between Arminianism and Calvinism, and thus endeavours to unite both schemes. With the Calvinist, he professes to believe that a certain number, determined upon in the divine councils, will be infallibly saved; and with the Arminian he joins in rejecting the doctrine of reprobation as absurd and impious; admits that Christ, in a certain sense, died for all, and supposes that such a portion of grace is allotted to *every* man, as renders it his own fault if he doth not attain to eternal life. This conciliatory system was espoused

by the famous non-conformist Richard Baxter, who lived in the last century, and who was equally celebrated for the acuteness of his controversial talents, and the utility of his practical writings. Hence came the term Baxterians, among whom are generally ranked both Watts and Doddridge. In the scale of religious sentiment, Baxterianism seems to be with respect to the subject of the divine favor, what Arianism is with respect to the person of Christ. It appears to have been considered by some pious persons as a safe middle way between two extremes. Baxter was an extraordinary character in the religious world. He wrote above 120 books, and had above 60 written against him. Though he was of a very metaphysical genius, and consequently sometimes made a distinction without a difference, yet the great object of most of his productions was peace and amity. Accordingly his religious system was formed not to inflame the passions and widen the breaches, but to heal those wounds of the Christian Church, under which she had long languished.*

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* For the particular detail given of the Calvinistic and Arminian sentiments, see a brief but useful history of the Christian church, in 2 vols. by Dr. Gregory. The best and amplest ecclesiastical history is Mosheim's, in 6 vols. translated from the Latin into English by Dr. Maclaine, of the Hague, who has enriched it with many valuable notes.

The *Antinomian* derives his name from two Greek words, αντι, against, and νομος, a law; his favorite tenet being, that the law is not a rule of life to believers. It is not easy to ascertain what he means by this position. But he seems to carry the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and of salvation by faith without works, to such lengths as to injure, if not wholly destroy, the very obligation to moral obedience. Antinomianism may be traced to the period of the reformation, and its founder was John Agricola, originally a disciple of Luther. The Papists, in their disputes with the Protestants of that day, carried the merit of good works to an extravagant length; and this induced some of their opponents to run into the opposite extreme. This sect (says the Encyclopædia) sprung up in England, during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, and extended their system of libertinism much farther than Agricola, the disciple of Luther. Some of their teachers expressly maintained, that as the elect cannot fall from grace, nor forfeit the divine favour, the wicked actions they commit are not really sinful, nor are to be considered as instances of their violation of the divine law, and consequently they have no occasion either to confess their sins or to break them off by repentance. According to them, it is one of the essential and distinctive characters of the

elect, that they cannot do any thing displeasing to God, or prohibited by the law. Luther, Rutherford, Sedgwick, Gataker, Witsius, Bull, Williams, &c. have written refutations; whilst Crisp, Richardson, Saltmarsh, put forth defences of the Antinomians; Wisgandus wrote "A Comparison between ancient and modern Antinomians." The late Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, in Shropshire, published *Four Checks to Antinomianism*, which have been much read, and greatly admired.

The term *Antinomian* has been frequently fixed on persons by way of reproach; and therefore many who have been branded with this name have repelled the charge. There are many Antinomians, indeed, of a singular cast in Germany, and other parts of the continent; they condemn the moral law as a rule of life, and yet profess a strict regard for the interests of practical religion. Many persons, however, who reprobate the system of John Calvin, pronounce Antinomianism to be nothing more than *Calvinism run to seed*. Speculative sentiments of any kind ought not to be carried to a degree which might endanger even in appearance the sacred cause of morality.

III.

Opinions respecting Church Government, and the Administration of Ceremonies.

" THE extent of Christianity in the world, or all those several kingdoms and countries where the Christian religion is professed and embraced (says Mr. Martin in his Philological Library) are, taken together, called *Christendom*; and this consisteth of many (some more general, some more particular, &c.) different religious societies, which are called *churches*. A Christian church is a society or congregation of men and women, who are called out from the vicious world by the preaching of the gospel, and are regulated in all the parts of their ritual discipline and articles of faith by the plain rules and prescriptions of the New Testament, and whose lives are correspondent to their holy professions. The ministers of the Christian church, in its primitive state, were extraordinary or ordinary. The *Extraordinary* were chiefly three: 1. *Apostles*, who were delegated by Christ with power and commission to preach the gospel, and work miracles in confirmation thereof among all nations. 2. *Prophets*, who were not such as simply foretold things, but those to whom God was pleased to

reveal his more secret counsels and designs, and who related and preached the same to men. 3. *Evangelists*, such as were assistants to the apostles in preaching the gospel, and were endued with many extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, as of languages and interpretations, &c. But since the establishment of Christianity in the world, these *extraordinary officers* have ceased. The *ordinary* ministers of the Christian church are principally three: 1. A *Bishop*, who had the oversight of the flock or church of Christ; to him pertained the preaching of the word, and due regulation of the church in faith and manners. And this rule and precedence of the Bishop is called *Episcopacy*. 2. *Presbyters* or *Elders*, or *Priests;* these were such as preached the word, and administered the sacraments, and performed all the other sacred functions of the ministry, under the inspection of the Bishop But it is a controversy, whether the scripture doth not intend the *same* person or officer by the appellations *Bishop* and *Presbyter*. The power of the *Presbyter* is called Presbytery. 3. *Deacons;* these were such as officiated in that part of the Christian ministry which related to the *poor*, and their business was to take the collections of money made in the church, and to distribute it to the necessities of the poor, and other sacred uses. And their office, properly speaking,

is called the *Ministry* or Deaconship. These officers are perpetual in the Christian church."—After this introductory explanation of the Christian church, I proceed to the *Opinions respecting church government and the administration of ceremonies.*

The *Papists* are so denominated from their leading tenet—the infallibility and supremacy of the Pope (in the Latin, *Papa*, signifying father,) which they strenuously maintain. By the *infallibility* of the Pope, is understood, that the Pope cannot err in ecclesiastical matters; and by his *supremacy* is meant his authority over all the churches, and sometimes over all the princes of the earth. This enormous power has been for some time diminishing, and the Roman Catholics at present are much divided on the subject. Some allow the Pope's infallibility and supremacy in their full extent; others acknowledge them in part; and a third wholly reject them. The late Father O'Leary's Tracts also may be consulted, who had a dispute on Popery with the Reverend John Wesley. They also profess to believe, 1. In seven sacraments—baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, or the anointing the sick in the prospect of death, orders, and matrimony. With respect to the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, they hold the doctrine

of *transubstantiation*, or that the bread and wine are changed into the *body and blood* of Christ; the paying divine worship to the host, or consecrated wafer, and the allowing communion only in one kind, viz. bread, to the laity. 2. In works of supererogation, or that the good works of saints are meritorious enough to supply the deficiency of others. 3. In the celibacy, or single life of the clergy. 4 In the worship of images and sacred relics. And, 5. In the celebration of divine service in an unknown tongue. Many, however, of the adherents of Popery, in the present day, reject some of the above tenets; and more especially renouncing the supremacy of the Pope, distinguish themselves by the name of Catholics, and sometimes of Catholic Dissenters. The publications of the late Dr. Geddes, on this subject, are worthy of attention. He was a liberal and learned priest among this class of the Roman Catholics, and was for several years engaged in a translation of the Bible under the patronage of Lord Petre. Among the Roman Catholics there are to be found several monastic orders, such as the Augustines, the Benedictines, the Carmelites, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, &c. and also a variety of sects, such as the Jesuits, the Jansenists, the Molinists, and others, some of whom were sects of celebrity. The ingenious Pascal, in his *Provincial Letters* aimed an effective blow

at the order of the Jesuits, and it was abolished in France in 1762, on the supposition that they adopted practices which were inimical to the welfare of their country.

In the council of Trent, held 1549, the tenets of the Papists were reduced into one compact standard, and the summary of Popery, exhibited in Pope Pius's creed, contains the substance of the decrees and canons of this council. The creed is divided into twenty-four articles. The first twelve are expressed in the very words of the creed called the *Nicene;* and the remaining twelve are new articles, truly Romish. See Burrough's View of Popery, taken from the Creed of Pope Pius the VIth, 1735. Father Paul, of Venice, has immortalized himself by a faithful history of the council of Trent; and though himself a Papist, yet he has exposed with freedom the intrigues by which this council was conducted. Bellarmine, an acute Jesuit, and Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, are the two most celebrated defenders of Popery. They had also amongst them several eloquent preachers; and the sermons of Massilon, Bourdaloue, and Flechier, are esteemed models of pulpit eloquence. In this country several penal laws were in force against the Roman Catholics; but most of them were repealed in the course of the present reign. It was an opposition to the repeal of these laws

that occasioned the disgraceful riots, which broke out during the month of June, 1780, and threatened the destruction of the metropolis.

It is remarkable, that the Papists have had amongst them a Pope, who used to be denominated a Protestant Pope. His name was Ganganelli, and is known to the world under the title of Clement the 14th. His liberality appeared in his actions, and it was his common saying, "We too often lay aside *charity* to maintain *faith*, without reflecting that if it is not allowed to tolerate men, it is forbidden to hate and persecute those who have unfortunately embraced it." He died in 1775, not without suspicion of poison. Such a character must be pronounced an honour to the Romish church, and it is to be hoped that there are many individuals of this description to be found in her communion. As to his *letters*, which for the liberality of their sentiments and the elegance of their diction have been much admired, many entertain doubts of their authenticity. Archbishop Fenelon also was distinguished both for his benevolence and piety.

Here the account of Popery should have ended, had not their doctrine of *Indulgences* deserved particular explication. The history and form of these indulgences are given us by that eminent historian Dr. Robertson, in his History of Charles the Fifth, and are here transcribed. "According to the doctrine of the Romish

church, all the good works of the saints, over and above those which were necessary towards their own justification, are deposited together, with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, in one inexhaustible treasury. The keys of this were committed to St. Peter, and to his successors the Popes, who may open it at pleasure, and by transferring a portion of this superabundant merit to any particular person for a sum of money, may convey to him either the pardon of his own sins, or a release for any one in whom he is interested, from the pains of purgatory; which indulgences were first invented in the eleventh century, by Urban the Second, as a recompense for those who went in person upon the meritorious enterprize (commonly called the *Crusades*) of conquering the holy land. They were afterwards granted to those who hired a soldier for that purpose; and in process of time were bestowed on such as gave money for accomplishing any pious work enjoined by the Pope. Julius the Second had bestowed indulgences on all who contributed towards building the church of St. Peter, at Rome; and as Leo the Tenth was carrying on that magnificent and expensive fabric, his grant was founded on the same pretence."

The following is the form of these indulgences: "May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most

holy passion. And I, by his authority, that of his blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred, and then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see, and, as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account; and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism, so that when you die the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

This was the form of absolution used by Tetzel, a Dominican friar, who, in the sixteenth century, was appointed to sell these indulgences in Germany, which eventually brought about the reformation.

This article shall conclude with the mention of a curious tract on Popery, lately published, entitled, "A Modest Apology for the Roman

Catholics of Great Britain, addressed to all moderate Protestants, particularly to the Members of both Houses of Parliament." This piece came from the pen of the late Dr. Geddes, already mentioned, and is written with his usual learning and ingenuity. It is, indeed, a most singular performance, and well worthy attention.

The *Greek*, or *Russian Church*, which now spreads itself over the eastern parts of Europe, is very ancient, and bears a considerable resemblance to the church of Rome. Denying, however, the infallibility and supremacy of the Pope, they are in communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople. Amongst other articles of belief, they are distinguished for these three: 1. The rejection of images. 2. The doctrine of consubstantiation, or the union of the body of Christ with the sacramental element. 3. The administration of baptism, by immersing the whole body in water.

The Russian, or Greek church equals the Latin church in the number of ceremonies and superstitious customs; some of which are thus described in Chantreau's Travels into Russia:—"At the beginning of the year, the king's day is a singular festival, which the Russians call the benediction of waters. On the Neva, then frozen, there is raised for this ceremony a kind of temple, of an octagonal figure, on the top of which is a St.

John the Baptist, and the inside is decorated with pictures, representing the baptism of Jesus, his transfiguration, and some other parts of his life. There your attention is drawn to an enormous Holy Ghost, appearing to descend from heaven, a decoration common to all the Greek churches, which introduces the Holy Ghost every where. In the middle of the sanctuary is a square space, where the broken ice leaves a communication with the waters running below, and the rest is ornamented with rich tapestry. Around this temple there is erected a kind of gallery, which communicates with one of the windows of the imperial palace, at which the empress and her family come out to attend the ceremony, which begins as soon as the regiments of guards have taken post on the river. Then the archbishop, at the sound of the bells, and of the artillery of the fortress, comes out of the palace, and walks in procession, with all his clergy, to the little temple we have just mentioned. When arrived at the place where the ice is broken, he descends, by means of a ladder, to the side of the water. There he dips his cross three or four times, afterwards says some prayers, an orison to the great St. Nicholas, and the waters are then thought blessed. The prelate sprinkles the water on the company around him, and on the colours of all the regiments that happen to be at St. Petersburg.

After this benediction, the archbishop retires. Then the people crowd towards the hole, by which this prelate has blessed the waters. They drink of them with a holy avidity. Notwithstanding the cold, the mothers plunge their infants, and the old men their heads, into them. Every body makes it a duty to carry away some for the purification of their houses, and curing certain distempers, against which the good Russians pretend this holy water is a powerful specific. While every one proceeds to this useful provision, four popes, who are at the four corners of the sanctuary, sing a kind of litany, in which they rehearse all the titles of the empress, and to which the people answer by these words, *Pameloi-Bog*—May God take pity on her.

"The Russians have a great number of abstinencies, or fasts, and among the rest four lents.

"The Greek priests have much more reverence and meditation in their way of going through divine service, than the Latin priests; and the discipline of their church directs, that when once a priest is at the altar, he must not remove from it during the time he ought to stand there, whatever may happen to him. For instance: we are told, that the prelate Gabriel, at present metropolitan of Novogorod, and Archimandrite to St. Alexander Neuski, being one day engaged in

saying mass at St. Petersburg, the house contiguous to the church took fire, and the flames reaching the steeple, Gabriel was warned of the danger he was in, and yet he stirred not, even although he was told a second time, that the bells would not be long in bruising him to atoms. As the cries of the multitude, conjuring him to remove from certain death, made no impression on him, one of his relations leaped towards the altar, and tore him from it. Scarcely was he twenty paces from it, when the steeple fell in with a great crash upon the sanctuary."

Efforts have been made to join the Greek to the reformed church; but hitherto they have failed of success. The Rev. Dr. John King published an account of the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Greek Church in Russia. There are several curious particulars to be found in the *Russian Catechism*, composed by the Czar, and which was published in London, 1725; in Robinson's *Ecclesiastical Researches*, and in a work not long ago published, entitled, *Secret Memoirs of the Court of Petersburg*.

That the reader may form some judgment of the *present* state of the Greek church, the last-mentioned work, presents us with the following recent fact, translated from the Imperial Gazette, of Petersburg:

" *Petersburg*, 17 *Dec.* 1798.

" In 1796, a coffin was found at the convent of Sumovin, in the city of Trotma, in the eparchy of Volgoda, containing a corpse, in the habit of a monk. It had been interred in 1568, yet was in a state of perfect preservation, as were also the garments. From the letters embroidered on them, it was found to be the body of the most memorable Feodose Sumorin, founder and superior of the convent, and who had been acknowledged as a saint during his life, for the miracles he had performed." It is then stated, that the directing synod had made *a very humble* report on this occasion to his Imperial Majesty. After which follows the Emperor's ukase or proclamation.

" We PAUL, &c. having been certified by a special report of the most holy synod, of the discovery that has been made in the convent of Spasso-Sumovin, of the miraculous remains of the most venerable Feodose, which miraculous remains, distinguish themselves by the happy cure of all those who have recourse to them with *entire* confidence: we take the discovery of these holy remains as a *visible sign*, that the Lord has cast his most gracious eye in the *most distinguished manner* on our reign. For this reason, we offer our fervent prayers and our gratitude to the supreme Dispenser of all things,

and charge our *most holy* synod to announce this *memorable discovery* throughout all our empire, according to the forms prescribed by the *holy* church, and by the *holy* fathers, &c. The 28th September, 1798."

This writer immediately adds, that *Paul* has enriched the Russian calendar with a few festivals; for *every* child that he has, gives rise to two new festivals, his birth-day and his name-day; and Paul has *nine* children already. From this circumstance, I am tempted to remark, that had *Paul* continued to live, and had the *Empress* proved only half as fruitful as *the lady usually represented in wax-work*, the *three hundred and sixty-five* days of the year would then be converted into *holy days*, and thus would the Greek church have attained to the highest pitch of perfection

The following anecdote, however, from the same work, and on the subject, almost exceeds credibility:—"I knew a Russian princess, who, had always a *large silver crucifix* following her in a separate carriage, and which she usually placed in her bed-chamber. When any thing fortunate had happened to her in the course of the day, and she was satisfied with her admirers, she had lighted candles placed about the crucifix, and said to it in a familiar style—"See, now, as you have been very good to day, you shall be treated well—you shall have candles all night

—I will love you—I will pray to you." If on the contrary, any thing occurred to vex this lady, she had the candles put out, forbad the servants to pay any homage to the poor image, and loaded it with reproaches and revilings!!!"—The author closes the chapter with this sensible paragraph—"I shall not particularize all the superstitions with which such a religion, if it deserves that name, must necessarily inspire an ignorant and enslaved people. It seems the present policy to thicken the cloud of errors, which the genius of Peter, the humanity of Elizabeth, and the philosophy of Catherine, sought in some degree to attenuate. While we pity the state of degradation under which a great people crouches, we should do justice to the enlightened Russians, by whom it is lamented, but they are chained by prejudices, as the giant Gulliver, by the Lilliputians; his bonds were weak and imperceptible as his enemies were minute, but every one of his hairs was separately fastened to the ground, and he was unable to raise his head."

In addition to the books already mentioned, I shall close this article of the *Greek Church*, with recommending MR. TOOKE's *History of Russia*, which may be satisfactorily consulted on *this* as well as many other subjects; for it is replete with information.

Under the appellation of *Protestants*, we include all who dissent from Popery, in whatever country they reside, or into whatever sects they have been since distributed. Abroad they are divided into two sorts—the *Lutherans*, who adhere to Luther's tenets; and the *Reformed*, who follow the discipline of Geneva. They were called Protestants, because, in 1529, they *protested* against a decree of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and declared, that they appealed to a general council. At present this vast class comprehends those whom Papists used contemptuously to style *Hugonots* in France; the *Refugees* in Holland, who fled thither upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, 1684; the *Presbyterians* in Scotland; the *Episcopalians* and *Nonconformists* in England; together with a numerous body of Christians in America.

As the *Protestants* originated at the Reformation, it will be proper to give a brief account of this illustrious period of ecclesiastical history.

For the three first centuries the religion of Jesus Christ stood on its own basis, was rapidly propagated among Jews and Gentiles, and suffered very severe persecutions from the Roman emperors. On the commencement of the fourth century, Constantine became a convert to Christianity, and incorporated it with the state. "It

was not till the fifth, or near the sixth century, that the Bishop of Rome arrogantly assumed an illegal supremacy over his fellow pastors, and in process of time aimed at the secular government of princess as well as subjects. Though several emperors embraced and defended Christianity, yet the gradual decay of the Roman empire was a serious impediment to the rising preachers of the newly established religion. Those accomplishments which adorned the conquests of the Romans, and the perfection of science, which had dignified their state, in such extent, were gradually swept away by the barbarous nations which defeated them, and the close of the sixth century could not trace a vestige of that exalted nation's government or its laws. Between four and five hundred years was the glorious luminary of the gospel eclipsed by the dismal return of ignorance and of superstition.* To these dark

* The *Crusades*, commonly called the *holy wars*, were expeditions undertaken by the Papists to drive the Turks from Palestine, or the land of Judea, and thus to rescue the holy sepulchre out of the hands of Infidels. There were eight of these crusades, the first in the year 1096, the last in 1270, assisted by Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I. King of England. The number of lives lost in these Quixotic expeditions is incredible; and it will remain to future ages a matter of astonishment, how enthusiasm and superstition could so completely infatuate the human mind. An account of the

ages (as they are by some justly termed, and by others called *the night of time*) are to be attributed the doctrine of indulgences, partial absolution, transubstantiation, the creation and worship of saints, purgatory, monastic seclusion, &c. So swift was the extinction of knowledge, and its revival so impeded, that persons of the greatest eminence in point of station could scarcely read or write. The clergy themselves, who engrossed what little science was remaining, could scarcely translate the liturgy; and, when ordained, were expressly obliged to affirm, that they could read the Gospels and Epistles, and explain them."

Crusades is given in Robertson's Charles the Fifth, and in Hume's History of England.

The *Inquisition* was a tribunal erected by the Popes for the examination and punishment of heretics. It was founded in the twelfth century by Father Dominic and his followers, who were sent by Pope Innocent the Third to *inquire* into the number and quality of heretics, and then to send an account to Rome. Hence they were termed *Inquisitors*, and their court the *Inquisition*. This infernal court was established in all Italy, and the dominions of Spain, except Naples and the Low Countries. Its cruelties were shocking beyond description; and were only one half of the bloody tale true, yet even then there is sufficient to freeze you with horror! See Dr. Chandler's History of the Inquisition, which is full of interesting information on the subject.

"The Reformation was effected in the sixteenth century, by the pious labours and unwearied studies of those bright characters, Erasmus, Luther, Huss, Jerome of Prague, &c. and as it should seem the particular act of Providence to facilitate their labours, and extend their influence, we find but half a century before the days of LUTHER the science of printing was discovered, and not long before that of the making of paper."

"This indefatigable reformer, having the way somewhat cleared for him by Erasmus, had the happiness to discover a copy of the Bible in the neglected library of his monastery. From so valuable a discovery the talents and application of this great man were called forth into more than ordinary exercise; and he quickly drew aside the veil which had concealed the rooted errors and abominations of the priesthood, and exposed the craft and artifice which had deluded the disciples, and disgraced the doctrine of the cross. Unawed by persecution, he proceeded coolly to examine into the several pretensions and inventions of the church of Rome, and overthrew them. He asserted and proved, that monastic retirement, if not contrary to, was no where required by the laws of God; and proposed to the Elector of Saxony, by whose permission he reformed the several churches within his dominions, to expel all abbots and monks, and to convert the con-

vents of mendicant friars into public schools and hospitals. He proceeded to expose all the absurdities and superstitions of the Romish church, and had the satisfaction to see his cause prevail." *Birch's Concilia.*

Dr. Robertson also observes—"It was from causes seemingly fortuitous, and from a source very inconsiderable, that all the mighty effects of the reformation flowed. Leo the Tenth, when raised to the papal throne, found the revenues of the church exhausted by the vast projects of his two ambitious predecessors, Alexander the Sixth, and Julius the Second. His own temper, naturally liberal and enterprizing, rendered him incapable of that severe and patient economy which the situation of his finances required. On the contrary, his schemes for aggrandizing the family of Medici, his love of splendor, his taste for pleasure, and his magnificence in rewarding men of genius, involved him daily in new expences; in order to provide a fund for which, he tried every device that the fertile invention of priests had fallen upon to drain the credulous multitude. Among others, he had recourse to a sale of indulgences. The right of promulgating these indulgences in Germany, together with a share in the profits arising from the sale of them, was granted to Albert, Elector of Mentz, and Archbishop of Magdeburg, who, as his chief agent

for retailing them in Saxony, employed Tetzel, a Dominican friar, of licentious morals, but of an active spirit, and remarkable for his noisy and popular eloquence. He, assisted by the monks of his order, executed the commission with great zeal and success, but with little discretion or decency; and though by magnifying excessively the benefit of their indulgences, and disposing of them at a very low price, they carried on for some time an extensive and lucrative traffic among the credulous multitude, the extravagance of their assertions, as well as the irregularities in their conduct, came at last to give general offence. The princes and nobles were irritated at seeing their vassals drained of so much wealth, in order to replenish the treasury of a profuse pontiff. Men of piety regretted the delusion of the people, who, being taught to rely for the pardon of their sins on the indulgences which they purchased, did not think it incumbent on them either to abound in faith or to practise holiness. Even the most unthinking were shocked at the scandalous behaviour of Tetzel and his associates, who often squandered in drunkenness, gaming and low debauchery, those sums which were piously bestowed, in hopes of obtaining eternal happiness; and *all* began to wish that some check were given to this commerce, no less detrimental to society than destructive to religion.

"The corrupt state of the church prior to the reformation, is acknowledged by an author who was both abundantly able to judge concerning this matter, and who was not over forward to confess it.—"For some years (says Bellarmine) before the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies were published, there was not (as contemporary authors testify) any severity in ecclesiastical judicatories, any discipline with regard to morals, any knowledge of sacred literature, any reverence for divine things; there was not almost any religion remaining."—Such a remarkable confession made by the avowed champion of Popery, should not pass unnoticed by Protestants; and before the enemies of Protestantism inveigh against the reformation, let them consider its absolute necessity, and contemplate the innumerable advantages with which it was attended."*

* The *proselyting* spirit of the Romish religion is proverbial. The above account of the reformation is therefore designed to counteract the spread of Popery, which no doubt some of the French priests are attempting, who have been so plentifully imported into this country. No one pities their *exiled* situation more than the writer of this Sketch; but he should be sorry if (like Dr. Horsley) his commiseration should get the better of his *Protestantism*, and induce him to approve of a religion which (to say the least) is certainly, in the opinion of all Protestants, the grossest corruption of Christianity. The Roman Catholics in England, however, are in general more intelligent and liberal than they were in former days.

A symbolical representation of the reformation was exhibited before Charles the Vth and his brother Ferdinand at Augsburgh, in 1530, at the time when the Lutherans presented their confession of faith to that assembly. As the princes were at table, a company of persons offered to act a small comedy for the entertainment of the company. They were ordered to begin; and first entered a man in the dress of a doctor, who brought a large quantity of small wood, of straight and crooked billets, and laid it on the middle of the hearth, and retired. On his back was written *Reuchlin.* When this actor went off, another entered apparelled also like a doctor, who attempted to make faggots of the wood, and to fit the crooked to the straight; but having laboured long to no purpose, he went away out of humour, and shaking his head. On his back appeared the name of *Erasmus.* A third dressed like an Augustinian monk, came in with a chaffing-dish full of fire, gathered up the crooked wood, clapped it on the fire, and blew it till he made it burn, and went away; having upon his frock the name of *Luther.* A fourth entered dressed like an Emperor, who seeing the crooked wood all on fire, seemed much concerned, and to put it out, drew his sword, and poked the fire with it, which only made it burn the brisker. On his back was written Charles the Vth. Lastly, a fifth entered in his

pontifical habit and triple crown, who seemed extremely surprised to see the crooked billets all on fire, and by his countenance and attitude betrayed excessive grief. Then looking about on every side to see if he could find any water to extinguish the flame, he casts his eyes on two bottles in a corner of the room, one of which was full of oil and the other of water, and in his hurry he unfortunately seized the oil, and poured it on the fire, which unfortunately made it blaze so violently, that he was forced to walk off. On his back was written *Leo the Xth.*

The reader, who is acquainted with the history of the reformation, will perceive the propriety of the lively representations here given of those several characters who were the principal actors in bringing about that memorable event.

CHILLINGWORTH, addressing himself to a Romish writer, speaks of *the religion of Protestants* in the following terms, worthy to be inscribed in letters of gold.—"Know then, Sir, that when I say *the religion of Protestants* is in prudence to be preferred before your's; as on the one side I do not understand by your religion the doctrine of *Bellarmine* or *Baronius*, or any other private man amongst you, nor the doctrine of the Sorbonne, or of the Jesuits, or of the Dominicans, or of any other particular company among you, but that wherein you all agree, or profess

to agree, *The Doctrine of the Council of Trent:* So accordingly on the other side, by *the religion of Protestants* I do not understand the doctrine of *Luther* or *Calvin*, or *Melancthon*, nor *the confession of Augsburg*, or *Geneva*, nor the *Catechism of Heidelberg*, nor *the articles of the Church of England*—no, nor the *harmony of Protestant confessions*; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of faith and action, that is, THE BIBLE. The *Bible*, I say, the *Bible only*, is the religion of Protestants. Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion; but as a matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I, for my part, after a long, and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this ROCK only. I see plainly, and with my own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, and councils against councils; some fathers against other fathers, the same fathers against themselves; a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age: tra-

ditive interpretations of scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found: no tradition but that of scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in, in such an age after *Christ*, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of scripture only for any *considering* man to build upon. This, therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe. This I will profess: according to this, I will live; and for this, if there be occasion, I will not only willingly, but even gladly lose my life, though I should be sorry that *Christians* should take it from me.

" Propose me any thing out of this book, and require whether I believe or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this, *God hath said so, therefore it is true.* In other things I will take no man's liberty of judging from him; neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse *man*, nor the worse *Christian;* I will love no man the less, for differing in opinion from me. And what measure I mete to others, I expect from them again. I am fully assured that God *does* not, and therefore men *ought* not, to require any more of any man than this—" *To believe the*

scripture to be God's word; to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it."* Chillingworth's Works, fol. edit. 1742.

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* Our English translation of the Bible was made in the time and by the appointment of James the First. According to Fuller, the list of the translators amounts to forty-seven. This number was arranged under six divisions, and several parcels of the Bible assigned them. Every one of the company was to translate the whole parcel, then they were to compare these together, and when any company had finished their part they were to communicate it to the other companies, so that nothing should pass without general consent. The names of the persons and places where they met, together with the portions of scripture assigned each company, are to be found in *Johnson's Historical Account of the several Translations of the Bible.* These good and learned men entered on their work in the spring, 1607, and three years elapsed before the translation was finished.

From the mutability of language, the variation of customs, and the progress of knowledge, several passages in the Bible require to be newly translated, or to be materially corrected. Hence, in the present age, when biblical literature has been assiduously cultivated, different parts of the sacred volume have been translated by very able hands. The substituting a new translation of the Bible in the room of the one now in common use, has been much debated. Dr. Knox, in his ingenious essays, together with others, argue against it, whilst Dr. Newcombe, the late Lord Primate of Ireland, the late Dr. Geddes, of the Catholic persuasion, and the late Rev. Gilbert Wakefield, contended strenuously for it. The correction of several passages, however, would deprive Deists of many of their objections, prevent Christians from being misled into some absurd opinions, and be the means of making the scrip-

It may be proper to add, that Chillingworth was a learned divine of the Church of England, and lived in the reign of Charles the First. In the earlier part of life he embraced the Romish religion; but having found, after the most impartial investigation, that it was false and inconclusive, he returned to the communion of the church of England, and vindicated the Protestant religion, in a work entitled, *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation.* Many curious particulars respecting Popery will be found in *the Romish Ecclesiastical History of Late Years,* by Richard Steele, Esq. in Geddes's *Tracts,* and in Bowyer's *History of the Popes.*

Before we quit the subject of the reformation, it may be not improper to add a short account of the *Lutherans.* It has been already said, that the Protestants were at first divided into the Lu-

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tures more intelligible, and consequently more beneficial to the world.

Dr. Alexander Geddes, at his decease, had got as far as the *Psalms,* in the translation of the Old Testament. Dr. Newcombe and Mr. Wakefield, published entire translations of the New Testament, of singular merit and ability. The Rev. Edmund Butcher also has just laid before the public a *Family Bible,* in which many of the errors of the common translation are corrected, and notes added by way of illustration, whilst the text broken down into *daily lessons,* is happily adapted to the purposes of family devotion.

therans, who adhere to Luther's tenets and the Reformed, who follow the doctrine and discipline of Geneva. In other words, Luther was at the head of one party; Calvin, the chief of the other. The tenets of the latter have been specified; those of the former, therefore, are the present subject of enquiry.

The *Lutherans*, of all Protestants, are those who differ least from the Romish church, as they affirm that the body and blood of Christ are materially present in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, though in an incomprehensible manner; they likewise represent some religious rites and institutions, as the use of images in churches, the distinguishing vestments of the clergy, the private confession of sins, the use of wafers in the administration of the Lord's Supper, the form of exorcism in the celebration of baptism, and other ceremonies of the like nature as tolerable, and some of them useful. The Lutherans maintain with regard to the divine decrees, that they respect the salvation or misery of men, in consequence of a *previous knowledge of their sentiments and characters*, and not as free and unconditional, and as founded *on the mere will of God*, which is the tenet of the Calvinists. Towards the close of the last century, the Lutherans began to entertain a greater liberality of sentiment

than they had before adopted, though in many places they persevered longer in severe and despotic principles than other Protestant churches. Their public teachers now enjoy an unbounded liberty of dissenting from the decisions of those symbols or creeds, which were once deemed almost infallible rules of faith and practice, and of declaring their dissent in the manner they judge most expedient. Mosheim attributes this change in their sentiments to the maxim which they generally adopted, that *Christians were accountable to God alone, for their religious opinions*; and that no individual could be justly punished by the magistrate for his erroneous opinions, while he conducted himself like a virtuous and obedient subject, and made no attempts to disturb the peace and order of civil society.

It may be just added, that Luther's opinion respecting the sacrament, is termed *Consubstantiation*, and it was that the partakers of the Lord's Supper, received *along with* the bread and wine the real body and blood of Christ. And this, says Dr. Mosheim, in their judgment was a mystery, which they did not pretend to explain. But his translator, Dr. Maclaine, justly remarks, "That Luther was not so modest as Dr. Mosheim here represents him. He pretended to explain his doctrine of the *real presence*, absurd and contradictory as it is, and uttered much senseless jargon

on the subject. As in a *red-hot iron*, said he, two distinct substances, viz. *iron and fire* are united, so is the body of Christ joined with the bread, in the eucharist. I mention this miserable comparison, to shew into what absurdities the towering pride of system, will often betray men of deep sense and true genius."

Such is the account given us of the Lutherans in a respectable work, and it appears to be founded in truth. I shall only remark, that according to the above sketch, Luther differed considerably from Calvin, respecting election and reprobation, and as to the principle, that Christians are accountable to God alone, for their religious opinions, it is a sentiment worthy of a great and elevated mind. It is the corner-stone on which the reformation has been raised. It is the only true foundation of religious improvement, and wherever it is sincerely embraced, will check every degree of uncharitableness and persecution, and forward the blessed reign of love and charity amongst the professors of Christianity.

The appellation *Hugonots*, was given to the French Protestants in 1561. The term is (by some) supposed to be derived from a gate in Tours, alled *Hugon*, where they first assembled. According to others, the name is taken from the first words of their original protest or confession

of faith—*Huc nos venimus*, &c. During the reign of Charles the Ninth, and on the 24th of August, 1572, happened the massacre of Bartholomew, when 70,000 Protestants throughout France were butchered, with circumstances of aggravated cruelty. It began at Paris in the night of the festival of Bartholomew, by secret orders from Charles the Ninth, at the instigation of his mother, the Queen Dowager Catherine de Medicis. See Sully's Memoirs, and also a fine description of it in the second canto of Voltaire's *Henriade*.

In 1598, Henry the Fourth passed the famous *Edict of Nantz*, which secured to his old friends the Protestants the free exercise of their religion. This edict was revoked by Lewis the Fourteenth. Their churches were then erased to the ground; their persons insulted by the soldiery, and, after the loss of innumerable lives, 50,000 valuable members of society were driven into exile! In Holland they built several places of worship, and had amongst them some distinguished preachers. Among others were Superville, Dumont, Dubosc, and the eloquent Saurin, five volumes of whose select sermons were translated into our language by the late Mr. Robinson of Cambridge. In one of these sermons Saurin makes the following fine apostrophe to that tyrant, Lewis the Fourteenth, by whom they were driven into exile—"And

thou, dreadful prince, whom I once honoured as my king, and whom I yet respect as a scourge in the hand of Almighty God, *thou* also shalt have a part in my good wishes! These provinces, which thou threatenest, but which the arm of the Lord protects; this country, which thou fillest with refugees, but fugitives animated with love; these walls, which contain a thousand martyrs of thy making, but whom religion renders victorious, all these yet resound benedictions in thy favour. God grant the fatal bandage that hides the truth from thine eyes may fall off! May God forget the rivers of blood with which thou hast deluged the earth, and which thy reign hath caused to be shed! May God blot out of his book the injuries which thou hast done us, and while he rewards the sufferers, may he pardon those who exposed us to suffer! O may God, who hath made thee to us, and to the whole church, a minister of his judgments, make thee a dispenser of his favours, and administrator of his mercy!"

About the time of the revolution, 1688, there were many controversies between the Protestant and the Popish divines, occasioned by James the Second's unavailing attempt to bring in Popery. Tillotson and Burnet, two clergymen of the church of England, rendered Protestantism great service by their writings; and it is conjectured,

were, on that account, elevated to the Bench by King William of immortal memory. There are also two excellent volumes of *Sermons against Popery*, preached in the early part of this century, by various *dissenting ministers*, at *Salter's Hall*. See also a sermon by the Rev. Robert Winter, entitled, "*Reflections on the present State of Popery*," delivered at Salter's Hall, November, 1800; from the perusal of which, the reader will find much satisfaction. Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, and *The History of his Own Times*, published after his death by his son, are two works which throw much light on the state of religion in the last and preceding centuries among Papists, Churchmen, and Dissenters. The merit of these publications, particularly of the latter, is judiciously appreciated by Dr. Kippis, under the article *Burnet*, in the *Biographia Britannica*. To these may now be added, an *excellent Defence of Protestantism*, by Dr. *Sturges*, in his answer to Mr. Milner, who in his *History of Winchester*, takes every opportunity of reprobating the Protestant religion, and of erecting on its ruins his beloved edifice of Popery. Dr. S. shews the rise, progress, and tendency of the Romish religion; animadverts with spirit on the calumnies by which his antagonist had endeavoured to blacken the characters of the reformers: and finally, he

proves the Protestant religion by its views of the Divine Being, and by its regard for the rights of mankind, to be the *only true* and *primitive* Christianity.

The *Episcopalians*, in the modern acceptation of the term, belong more especially to the Church of England, and derive this title from *Episcopus*, the Latin word for bishop; or if it be referred to its Greek origin from Σκοπεω to look, επι over, implying the care and diligence with which bishops are expected to preside over those committed to their guidance and direction. They insist on the divine origin of their bishops, and other church officers, and on the alliance between church and state. Respecting these subjects, however, Warburton and Hoadley, together with others of the learned amongst them, have different opinions, as they also have on their thirty-nine articles; which were established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They are to be found in most *Common-Prayer Books;* and the Episcopal church in America has reduced their number to twenty. By some, these articles are made to speak the language of Calvinism, and by others have been interpreted in favour of Arminianism. The doctrines and discipline of the Church of England are nearly connected with the reformation of Luther in Germany, and also with the

state of ecclesiastical affairs for a considerable time before that reformation commenced.

Eusebius positively asserts, that Christianity was first introduced into South Britain by the apostles and their disciples; and it is supposed that the apostle Paul visited this country, whose zeal, diligence, and fortitude, were abundant. It is also said, that numbers of persons professed the Christian faith here about the year 150; and according to Usher, there was, in the year 182, a school of learning, to provide the British churches with proper teachers. On the subject of *the first introduction of Christianity in this island*, the reader is referred to the first volume of *Henry's History of Great Britain*, where his curiosity will be considerably gratified.

John Wickliffe, educated at Oxford, in the reign of Edward the Third, was the first person who publicly questioned, and boldly refuted the doctrines of Popery. He left behind him many followers, who were called *Wickliffites* and *Lollards*; the latter being a term of reproach taken from the Flemish tongue. In the council of Constance, 1415, the memory and opinions of Wickliffe (who died peaceably at Lutterworth, 1384,) were condemned, and soon after his bones were dug up and burnt. This impotent rage of his enemies served only to promote the cause of reform which Wickliffe had espoused. It is with

a view to this subsequent extension of his doctrine that the judicious Rapin observes—"His ashes were thrown into the brook which runs through the town of Lutterworth, the brook conveyed the ashes to the Severn, and the Severn to the Sea!"

The Church of England broke off from the Romish church in the time of Henry the Eighth, when (as has been already related) Luther had began the reformation in Germany. In earlier life, and during the earlier part of his reign, Henry was a bigotted Papist, burnt William Tyndal, who made one of the first and best English translations of the New Testament, and wrote fiercely in defence of the seven sacraments, against Luther, for which the Pope honoured him with the title *Defender of the Faith.* This title is retained by the kings of England even to the present day, though they are the avowed enemies of those opinions, by contending for which he acquired that honourable distinction. Henry, falling out with the Pope, took the government of ecclesiastical affairs into his own hands; and, having reformed many enormous abuses, entitled himself Supreme Head of the Church.

When the Reformation in England first took place, great efforts were made to promote the reading of the scriptures among the common people. Among other devices for the purpose, the

following curious one was adopted. Bonner, Bishop of London, caused six Bibles to be chained to certain convenient places in St. Paul's church, for all that were so well inclined to resort unto; together with a certain admonition to the readers fastened upon the pillars to which the Bibles were chained, to this tenor—"That whosoever came there to read should prepare himself to be edified, and made the better thereby; that he bring with him discretion, honest intent, charity, reverence, and quiet behaviour; that there should no such number meet together there as to make a multitude; that no such exposition be made thereupon but what is declared in the book itself; that it be not read with noise in time of divine service, or that any disputation or contention be used about it; that in case they continued their former misbehaviour, and refused to comply with these directions, the king would be forced against his will to remove the occasion, and take the Bible out of the church."—See Johnson's Historical Account of the several English Translations of the Bible, and the opposition they met with from the Church of Rome.

The Church of England is governed by the king, who is the supreme head; by two archbishops, and by twenty-four bishops. The benefices of the bishops were converted by William the Conqueror into temporal baronies; so that

every prelate has a seat and vote in the House of Peers. Dr. Benjamin Hoadley, however, in a sermon preached from this text, *my kingdom is not of this world*, insisted that the clergy had no pretentions to temporal jurisdiction, which gave rise to various publications, termed by way of eminence the *Bangorian* Controversy, for Hoadley was then Bishop of Bangor.* There is a bishop of Sodor and Man, who has no seat in the House of Peers; and a late prelate of this see was the amiable and learned Dr. Wilson. Since the death of the pedantic and intolerant Archbishop Laud, men of moderate principles have been raised to the see of Canterbury, and this hath tended not a little to the tranquillity of church and state. The established church of Ireland is the same as the church of England, and is governed by four archbishops and eighteen bishops.

In the course of the last century disputes arose among the English clergy respecting the propriety of subscribing to any human formulary of religious sentiments. An application for its removal was made to Parliament in 1772, by the petitioning clergy, and received, as it deserved,

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* The memory of this eminent prelate has been insulted by Mr. *Milner* in his *History of Winchester*; but Dr. Hoadley Ashe and Dr. Sturges have amply vindicated it.

the most public discussion in the House of Commons. The third edition of Archdeacon Blackburn's excellent *Confessional*, was published 1770, two years previous to the presentation of this clerical petition, when the long controversy in consequence of the work, was closed, and indeed introductory to the application to Parliament pending, by which the controversy was renewed. *Mr. Dyer's* Treatise against Subscription, appeared many years afterwards. Some respectable clergymen were so impressed with the impropriety of supscription, that they resigned their livings, and published reasons for their conduct. Among these, the names of *Robertson*, *Jebb*, *Matty*, *Lindsey*, and *Disney*, will be long remembered. Several others, indeed, resigned preferment held by the same tenure for similar reasons, without giving such reasons to the public, as Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Wakefield, &c. and it has been said that many more reluctantly continue in their conformity, under the contest between their convictions and their inability from various causes to extricate themselves, but who will never repeat their subscriptions. The Rev. T. Lindsey, however, withdrew from the church, because he objected to the trinity; professing to worship the *Father* only as the *one true God*, to the exclusion of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit, as

objects of worship. See "*The Book of Common Prayer reformed*," used at Essex Street Chapel; a new edition of which has been just published.

Attempts have been made to amend the articles, the liturgy, and some things which related to the internal government of the church of England. Dr. Watson, the present Bishop of Landaff, wrote *a Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury*, in the year 1781, in which he argues for the propriety of a more equal distribution of salary among the different orders of the clergy. But this plan, projected by the worthy prelate, together with the preceding proposals for reform by the authors of the *Free and Candid Disquisitions*, and the *Appeal to Reason and Candor*, have been suffered to sink into oblivion. The church of England has produced a succession of eminent men. Among its ornaments are to be reckoned *Usher*, *Hall*, *Taylor*, *Stillingfleet*, *Cudworth*, *Wilkins*, *Tillotson*, *Cumberland*, *Barrow*, *Burnet*, *Pearson*, *Hammond*, *Whitby*, *Clarke*, *Hoadley*, *Jortin*, *Secker*, *Horne*, *Lowth*, and *Warburton*. In the Appendix to *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*, will be found a circumstantial account of the correspondence carried on in the year 1718, between Dr. Wm. Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, and certain doctors of the Sorbonne of Paris, relative to a project of union between the English and Gallican churches.

Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity—Pearson on the Creed, Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles, and Bishop Prettyman's *Elements of Theology,** are deemed the best defences of Episcopacy.

In Scotland, and other parts, since the revolution, there existed a species of Episcopalians called *Non-jurors,* because being inflexibly attached to the *Stuarts,* who were then driven from the throne, they refused to take the oath of allegiance to the *Brunswick* family. On the decease, however, of the Pretender, whom the Non-jurors stiled Prince Charles, and who died at Rome, 1788, they complied with the requisition of Government, and now the distinction is abolished.

The reformation in England, begun under the auspices of Henry the Eighth, was greatly checked by Mary, who proceeded like a female fury to re-establish Popery. In her sanguinary reign were burnt one archbishop, four bishops, twenty-one divines, eight gentlemen, one hundred and eighty-four artificers, and one hundred husbandmen, servants, and labourers; twenty-six wives, twenty widows, and nine virgins, two boys, and two infants!!! On the death of Mary, 1558,

* Mr. *William Friend,* the celebrated mathematician, late of Cambridge, published a series of *letters* to this prelate, by way of reply to certain passages in his *Elements of Theology.*

Elizabeth ascended the throne, repealed the laws which had been established in favour of Popery, and restored her supremacy. In these matters she wonderfully succeeded, since of 9,400 beneficed clergymen, about 120 only refused to comply with the reformation. The establishment of Protestantism in England underwent various fluctuations till the *glorious revolution* under William, in 1688, placed it on a firm and permanent foundation. The family of the Stuarts were bitter enemies to the civil and religious liberties of their subjects, and violently attached to Popery. Dr. Goldsmith tells us, in his history of England, that James the Second, in endeavoring to convert his subjects to the Popish religion, descended so low as Colonel Kirke. But that daring and unprincipled soldier assured his majesty that he was pre-engaged, for that if ever he did change his religion, he had promised the Emperor of Morocco, when quartered at Tangiers, to turn *Mahometan!*

Mr. Gisborne, in his excellent *Familiar Survey of the Christian Religion*, has the following remarks on church government:—"In every community or body of men, civil or ecclesiastical, some species of government is requisite for the good of the whole. Otherwise all is irregularity, and interminable confusion. How then in any particular country is the Christian

church to be governed? "Every separate congregation," answers the *independent*, "is a sovereign church amenable to no extrinsic jurisdiction, and entitled to no jurisdiction over other churches." "That mode of government," replies the *Presbyterian*, "is calculated to destroy unity, co-operation, and concord among Christians. All congregations within the same, which agree in doctrine, ought to be under the general superintendence of a representative assembly, composed of their ministers and delegates." "Such a representative assembly," returns the Episcopalian, "wants vigour and dispatch, and is perpetually open to tumult and partiality, and faction. Divide the country into dioceses, and station a bishop in each, armed with sufficient authority, and restrained by adequate laws, from abusing it. Such was the apostolic government of the church—such, perhaps," he adds, "was the government enjoined on succeeding ages." "Away," cries the Papist, with these treasonable discussions. The Pope, the successor of St. Peter, is by divine right the only source of ecclesiastical power, the universal monarch of the universal church."

Writing as I am to Protestants, I may pass by the claim of the successor of St. Peter. But the concluding words of the Episcopalian are of prime importance. If Christ or his apostles

enjoined the uniform adoption of Episcopacy, the question is decided. Did Christ then or his apostles deliver or indirectly convey such an injunction? This topic has been greatly controverted. The fact appears to be this—that our Saviour did not pronounce upon the subject; that the apostles uniformly established a bishop in every district, as soon as the church in that district became numerous, and thus clearly evinced their judgment as to the form of ecclesiastical government, most advantageous at least in those days to Christianity; but that they left no command, which rendered Episcopacy universally indispensable in future times, if other forms should evidently promise, through local opinions and circumstances, greater benefit to religion. Such is the general sentiment of the present church of England on the subject." Bishop Prettyman has expressed himself much after the same manner in his *Elements of Theology*.

Dissenters from the church of England made their first appearance in Queen Elizabeth's time, when, on account of the extraordinary purity which they proposed in religious worship and conduct, they were reproached with the name of *Puritans*. They were greatly increased by the act of uniformity, which took place on Bartholomew-day 1662, in the reign of Charles the

Second. By this act 2,000 ministers were obliged to quit the established church, refusing to *conform* to certain conditions, whence they were called *Non-conformists*. An instructive and entertaining account of the lives, literature, and piety of these good men, is to be found in *Palmer's Non-conformist Memorial*, of which work, there is now in the press a new and improved edition. Their descendants are known by the name of *Protestant Dissenters*, and rank under the three respectable denominations of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists.

Of the origin and progress of the Dissenters, a full account is contained in *Neal's History of the Puritans*,* an improved edition of which work was lately published by Dr. Toulmin of Taunton, who has accompanied it with notes, in which are obviated the objections which have been made to it by Grey, Maddox, Warburton, and others. Here the historian traces, step by step, the differences which originally occasioned the separation, and an affecting narrative is given of the sufferings which our forefathers were

* It is remarkable, that little notice is taken in this work, of *John Bunyan*, the celebrated author of Pilgrim's Progress; he was twelve years in Bedford Goal, and therefore deserves to have been particularly mentioned, were it only for his sufferings as a *Protetant Dissenter*.

doomed to undergo in the cause of religious liberty. A brief history of the Puritans also was published in 1772, of which the author, the Rev. J. Cornish, has given an enlarged and pleasing edition. The principles on which the Dissenters separate from the church of England are the same with those on which she separates herself from the church of Rome. They may be summarily comprehended in these three; 1. The right of private judgment. 2. Liberty of Conscience. And, 3. The perfection of scripture as a Christian's *only* rule of faith and practice.

The late pious and learned Dr. Taylor of Norwich, thus expressed himself concerning the principles and worship of the Dissenters—"The principles and worship of Dissenters are not formed upon such slight foundation as the unlearned and thoughtless may imagine. They were thoroughly considered and judiciously reduced to the standard of scripture and the writings of antiquity, by a great number of men of learning and integrity. I mean the *Bartholomew-divines*, or the ministers ejected in the year 1662, men prepared to lose all, and to suffer martyrdom itself, and who actually resigned their livings (which with most of them were, under God, all that they and their families had to subsist upon) rather than sin against God and desert the cause of civil and religious liberty, which together with

serious religion would, I am persuaded, have sunk to a very low ebb in the nation, had it not been for the bold and noble stand these worthies made against imposition upon conscience, prophaneness, and arbitrary power. They had the best education *England* could afford, most of them were excellent scholars, judicious divines, pious, faithful, and laborious ministers, of great zeal for God and religion, undaunted and courageous in their master's work, standing close to their people in the worst of times, diligent in their studies, solid, affectionate, powerful, awakening preachers, aiming at the advancement of real vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, which it cannot be denied, flourished greatly wherever they could influence. Particularly they were men of great devotion and eminent abilities in prayer, uttered as God enabled them from the abundance of their hearts and affections, men of divine eloquence in pleading at the throne of grace, raising and melting the affections of their hearers, and being happily instrumental in transfusing into their souls the same spirit and heavenly gift. And this was the ground of all their other qualifications, they were excellent men, because excellent, instant, and fervent in prayer. Such were the *fathers* and *first formers* of the *Dissenting interest. Let my soul for ever be with the souls of these men.*"

The *Test Act* excludes Dissenters from filling public offices, except they take the sacrament at the established church, which some think cannot be consistently done by any conscientious Dissenter. Hence loud complaints have been raised respecting this exclusion, since, as members of the civil community, they are entitled to all the common privileges of that community. The *Test Act* was originally levelled against the Roman Catholics. The Dissenters have made several unsuccessful applications for its repeal. The question was warmly agitated in the House of Commons, 1787, and on each side numerous publications issued from the press. The chief argument urged for the continuance of the Test Act is *the safety of the established church.* The principal arguments alledged for its repeal are, that it is *a prostitution of the Lord's Supper*, and that *to withhold civil rights on account of religious opinions, is a species of persecution.*

The Dissenters, as a body, have not been unfruitful of great and learned men. Among their ornaments are to be ranked Baxter, Bates, Howe, Owen, Williams, Neal, Henry, Stennet, Evans, Gale, Foster, Leland, Grosvenor, Watts, Lardner, Abernethy, Doddridge, Grove, Chandler, Gill, Orton, Furneaux, Farmer, Towgood, Robinson, and Price. Though (as enemies have suggested) it may happen that among Dissenters sufficient

encouragement is not given in certain cases to men of talents and integrity, yet among their more liberal denominations, it must be confessed that a dissenting minister may, unawed by a conclave of cardinals—a bench of bishops—or a board of ministers—exercise in its fullest extent *the rights of private judgment*, which is the pride and pleasure of the human mind. In Pierce's *Vindication of the Dissenters*, Towgood's *Letters to White*, and Palmer's *Protestant Dissenter's Catechism*, are stated the grounds upon which their dissent from the established church is founded.

The members of the *Kirk of Scotland* are strictly speaking, the only *Presbyterians* in Great Britain. Their mode of ecclesiastical government was brought thither from Geneva by *John Knox*, the celebrated Scotch reformer, and who has been stiled the apostle of Scotland, for the same reason that Luther was called the *apostle of Germany*.

Contrary to the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians maintain that the church should be governed by Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies. The title Presbyterian comes from the Greek word Πρεσβυτερος, which signifies senior, or elder. In the kirk of Scotland there are fifteen synods and sixty-nine presbyteries. Their articles are

Calvinistic, and their general assembly is held annually in the month of May at Edinburgh. Dreadful scenes took place in Scotland previous to the establishment of Presbyterianism in its present form at the revolution, and its confirmation in 1706, by the act of union between the two kingdoms. During the commonwealth, Presbyterianism was the established religion, but on the restoration Episcopacy was introduced in its room. So averse, however, were the Scotch to the Episcopalians, and so harsh were the measures of the Episcopalian party, that the whole country was thrown into confusion. Leighton, the most pious and moderate prelate amongst them, disgusted with the proceedings of his brethren, resigned his bishopric, and told the king, "He would not have a hand in such oppressive measures, were he sure to plant the Christian religion in an infidel country by them; much less when they tended only to alter the form of church government." On the other hand, Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrew's, adopted violent measures, which terminated in his death. For in 1679, nine ruffians stopped his coach near St. Andrew's, assassinated him, and left his body covered with thirty-two wounds. On the monument of this unfortunate prelate, in one of the churches of St. Andrew's, I have seen an exact

representation in elegant sculpture of this tragical event.

In was in these troubled times that the Presbyterians drew up their famous *solemn league and covenant*, whereby they bound themselves to effect the extirpation of episcopacy. The Scotch church, however, is now considerably improved in sentiment and liberality, and some of their clergy stand foremost in the several departments of literature. *Robertson*, *Henry*, *Leechman*, *Blacklock*, *Gerard*, *Campbell*, and *Blair*, all recently deceased, are among its principal ornaments. In a selection of sermons, entitled the *Scotch Preacher*, will be found a pleasing specimen of the pulpit compositions of the Scotch clergy, delivered on particular occasions.

Dissenters from the Kirk or Church of Scotland, call themselves *Seceders;* for as the term *Dissenter* comes from the Latin word, *dissentio*, to differ, so the appellation *Seceder* is derived from another Latin word *secedo*, to separate or to withdraw from any body of men with which we may have been united. The Seceders are rigid Calvinists, rather austere in their manners, and in their discipline. Through a difference as to civil matters they are broken down into *Burghers* and *Anti-burghers*. Of these two

classes the latter are the most confined in their sentiments, and associate therefore the least with any other body of Christians. The *Seceders* originated under two brothers, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, about the year 1730. It is worthy of observation, that the Rev. George Whitefield, in one of his visits to Scotland, was solemnly reprobated by the *Seceders*, because he refused to confine his itinerant labours *wholly* to them. The reason assigned for this monopolization was, that they were EXCLUSIVELY *God's people!* Mr. Whitefield smartly replied, that *they* had therefore the *less need* of his services, for *his* aim was to turn *sinners* from the error and wickedness of their ways by preaching among *them*, glad tidings of great joy!

There is also a species of Dissenters from the church of Scotland called *Relief*, whose only difference from the Kirk is, the choosing of their own pastors. They are respectable as to numbers and ability.

The reformation in Scotland, like that in England and Germany, struggled with a long series of opposition, and was at length gloriously triumphant. Dr. *Gilbert Stewart*, therefore, closes his *History of the Reformation in North Britain* with the following animated reflections:

"From the order and the laws of our nature it perpetually happens that advantages are mixed

with misfortune. The conflicts which led to a purer religion, while they excite under one aspect the liveliest transports of joy, create in another a mournful sentiment of sympathy and compassion. Amidst the felicities which were obtained, and the trophies which were won, we deplore the melancholy ravages of the passions, and weep over the ruins of ancient magnificence. But while the contentions and the ferments of men, even in the road to improvements and excellence, are ever destined to be polluted with mischief and blood; a tribute of the highest panegyric and praise is yet justly to be paid to the actors in the reformation. They gave way to the movements of a liberal and a resolute spirit. They taught the rulers of nations that the obedience of the subject is the child of justice, and that men must be governed by their opinions and their reason. This magnanimity is illustrated by great and conspicuous exploits, which at the same time that they awaken admiration, are an example to support and animate virtue in the hour of trial and peril. The existence of civil liberty was deeply connected with the doctrines for which they contended and fought. While they treated with scorn an abject and a cruel superstition, and lifted and sublimed the dignity of man, by calling his attention to a simpler and a wiser theology, they were strenuous to give a permanent

security to the political constitution of their state. The happiest and the best interests of society were the objects for which they buckled on their armour, and to wish and to act for their duration and stability, are perhaps the most important employments of patriotism and public affection. The *reformation* may suffer fluctuations in its forms, but, for the good and the prosperity of mankind, it is to be hoped that it is never to yield and to submit to the errors and the superstitions it overwhelmed."

But the appellation *Presbyterian* is in England appropriated to a large denomination of Dissenters, who have no attachment to the Scotch mode of church government, any more than to Episcopacy amongst us, and therefore to this body of Christians the term Presbyterian in its original sense is improperly applied. How this misapplication came to pass cannot be easily determined, but it has occasioned many wrong notions, and should therefore be rectified. English Presbyterians, as they are called, adopt the same mode of church government with the Independents, which is the next sect to be mentioned. Their chief difference from the Independents is, that they are less attached to Calvinism, and consequently admit a greater latitude of religious sentiment.

Dr. Doddridge in his lectures has this paragraph on the subject, which may serve still further for its illustration. "Those who hold every *pastor* to be as a bishop or overseer of his own congregation, so that no other person or body of men have by divine institution a power to exercise any superior or pastoral office in it, may, properly speaking, be called (so far at least) *congregational;* and it is by a vulgar mistake that any such are called *Presbyterians*, for the *Presbyterian* discipline is exercised by *synods* and *assemblies*, subordinate to each other, and all of them subject to the authority of what is commonly called a *General Assembly*." This mode of church government is to be found in Scotland, and has been already detailed under a former article in this work.

The *Independents*, or *Congregationalists*, deny not only the subordination of the clergy, but also all *dependency* on other assemblies. Every congregation (say they) has in itself what is necessary for its own government, and is not subject to other churches or to their deputies. Thus this *independency* of one church with respect to another has given rise to the appellation *Independents;* though this mode of church government is adopted by the Dissenters in general. The *Independents* have been improperly con-

founded with the *Brownists*, for though they may have originally sprung from them, they excel them in the moderation of their sentiments, and in the order of their discipline. The first Independent or Congregational Church in England was established by a Mr. Jacob, in the year 1616; though a Mr. Robinson appears to have been the founder of this sect.

The *Brownists*, which have been just mentioned, were the followers of *Robert Brown*, a clergyman of the church of England, who lived about 1600. He inveighed against the ceremonies and discipline of the church, separated himself from her communion, and afterwards returned into her bosom. He appears to have been a persecuted man, of violent passions. He died in Northampton goal, 1630, after boasting that he had been committed to thirty-two prisons, in some of which he could not see his hand at noon day!

Before we proceed to the Baptists, it will be necessary just to remark, that *all* persons who *baptize infants*, are denominated *Pædobaptists*, from the Greek word, which signifies *child* or *infant*. Of course the Established Church, the Presbyterians both in Scotland and England, together with the Independents are all *Pædobaptists;* that is, baptizers of infants or children.

Their reasons for this practice are to be found in Wall, Towgood, Addington, Williams, Horsey, and others, who have expressly written on the subject with learning and ingenuity. They rest their arguments principally on the following circumstances: That baptism has succeeded instead of the rite of circumcision; that *housholds*, probably (say they) including children, were baptized; that Jesus shewed an affectionate regard for children; and finally, that it is the means of impressing the minds of parents with a sense of the duties which they owe their offspring, upon the right discharge of which depend the welfare and happiness of the rising generation. Persons, therefore, engage themselves as *sponsors* in the Established Church, who promise that they will take care of the morals of the children; among other sects the *parents* are made answerable, who indeed are the most proper persons to undertake the arduous task, and to see it duly accomplished. These preliminary remarks were necessary to render a sketch of the *Baptists* the more intelligible. We shall now therefore proceed to the denomination.

The *Baptists* are distinguished from other denominations respecting the *mode* and *subject* of baptism. They contend that this ordinance should be administered by *immersion* only, which

indeed is enjoined, though not practised, by the church of England. They also assert, that it should be administered to those alone who *profess* their belief in the Christian religion, and their determination of regulating their lives by its precepts. Some of the learned, however, suppose that the controversy is not so properly whether infants or adults should be baptized, as whether the rite should be administered on the profession of our *own* faith, or that of *another's* faith. See *Letters addressed to Bishop Hoadley*, by the late Mr. *Foot*, a General Baptist at Bristol.

The Baptists are divided into the *General*, who are Arminians, and into the *Particular*, who are Calvinists. Some of both classes allow *mixed communion*, by which is understood, that those who have not been baptized by *immersion* on the profession of their faith (but in their infancy, which *they* themselves deem *valid*) may sit down at the Lord's table along with those who have been thus baptized. This has given rise to some little controversy on the subject. Mr. Killingworth and Mr. Abraham Booth have written against free communion, but honest John Bunyan, Dr. Foster, Mr. Charles Bulkely, Mr. John Wiche, for many years a respectable General Baptist minister, at Maidstone, and Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, have strenuously contended for it. It is deeply to be regretted that

such disputes should ever have arisen, since they have contributed in no small degree to injure the repose, and retard the prosperity of the Christian Church.

The *General* Baptists have, in some of their churches, three distinct orders, separately ordained—*Messengers*, *Elders*, and *Deacons*; and their *General Assembly* is held annually in *Worship Street*, *London*, on the *Tuesday in the Whitsun Week*; it used to be on the Wednesday, but is changed for the convenience of ministers, who attend it from the country. They have thus met together for upwards of a century. Dr. John Gale, a learned General Baptist, had a famous controversy, in the beginning of this century, with Dr. Wall, who defended the practice of baptizing infants. But there has been a more recent controversy on the subject, between Mr. Abraham Booth, and Dr. Williams. The appellation *Anabaptist*, which comes from two Greek words, and signifies to *re-baptize*, is sometimes applied to this denomination of Christians. But this is an unjust accusation brought against them by their adversaries, and being deemed a term of reproach, ought to be wholly laid aside. See Dr. Rippon's *Baptist Register*. The late Mr. Robinson published a very valuable work, entitled, *The History of Baptism*.

The administration of baptism to *adults* by

immersion, has been the subject of so much ridicule and misrepresentation, that an account of it, taken from the latter work, shall be inserted, for the information of the serious reader. "The English and most foreign Baptists consider a *personal profession of faith*, and an *immersion* in water, essential to baptism. The profession of faith is generally made before the church at a church meeting. Some have a creed, and expect the candidate to assent to it, and to give a circumstantial account of his conversion. Others only require a person to profess himself a Christian. The former generally consider baptism as an ordinance, which initiates persons into a particular church; and they say, without breach of Christian liberty, they have a right to expect an agreement in articles of faith in their own societies. The latter only think baptism initiates into a profession of the Christian religion in general, and therefore say they have no right to require an assent to *our* creed of such as do not purpose to join our churches. They quote the baptism of the Eunuch, in the 8th of Acts, in proof. There are some who have no public faith, and who both administer baptism and admit to church membership any who profess themselves Christians. They administer baptism in their own baptisteries, and in public waters."

"Not many years ago at Whittlesford, seven miles from Cambridge, forty-eight persons were baptized in that ford of the river from which the village takes its name. At ten o'clock of a very fine morning in May, about 1500 people of different ranks assembled together. At half past ten in the forenoon, the late Dr. Andrew Gifford, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Sub-librarian of the British Museum, and teacher of a Baptist congregation in Eagle Street, London, ascended a movcable pulpit in a large open court-yard, near the river, and adjoining to the house of the Lord of the manor. Round him stood the congregation; people on horseback, in coaches, and in carts, formed the outside semicircle: many other persons sitting in the rooms of the house, the sashes being open, all were uncovered, and there was a profound silence. The doctor first gave out a hymn, which the congregation sung. Then he prayed. Prayer ended, he took out a New Testament, and read his text—*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.* He observed, that the force of the preposition had escaped the notice of the translators, and that the true reading was—I indeed *baptize* or dip you *in* water *at* or *upon* repentance; which sense he confirmed by the 41st verse of the 12th of Matthew, and other passages. Then he spoke as most Baptists do on these occasions, con-

cerning the *nature*, *subject*, *mode*, and *end* of this ordinance. He closed, by contrasting the doctrine of infant sprinkling with that of believer's baptism, which being a part of Christian obedience, was supported by divine promises, on the accomplishment of which, all good men might depend. After sermon, he read another hymn and prayed, and then came down. Then the candidates for baptism retired, to prepare themselves.

About half an hour after, the administrator, who that day was a nephew of the doctor's, and admirably qualified for the work, in a long black gown of fine baize, without a hat, with a small New Testament in his hand, came down to the river side, accompanied by several Baptist ministers and deacons of their churches, and the persons to be baptized. The men came first, two and two, without hats, and dressed as usual, except that instead of coats, each had on a long white baize gown, tied round the waste with a sash. Such as had no hair, wore white cotton or linen caps. The women followed the men, two and two, all dressed neat, clean, and plain, and their gowns white linen or dimity. It was said, the garments had knobs of lead at bottom, to make them sink. Each had a long light silk cloak hanging loosely over his shoulder, a broad ribband tied over her gown beneath the breast,

and a hat on her head. They all ranged themselves around the administrator at the water side. A great number of spectators stood on the banks of the river on both sides; some had climbed and sat on the trees, many sat on horseback and in carriages, and all behaved with a decent seriousness, which did honour to the good sense and the good manners of the assembly, as well as to the free constitution of this country. First, the administrator read an hymn, which the people sung. Then he read that portion of scripture which is read in the Greek church on the same occasion, the history of the baptism of the Eunuch, beginning at the 26th verse, and ending with the 39th. About ten minutes he stood expounding the verses, and then taking one of the men by the hand, he led him into the water, saying as he went, *See here is water, what doth hinder? If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized.* When he came to a sufficient depth, he stopped, and with the utmost composure placing himself on the left hand of the man, his face being towards the man's shoulder, he put his right hand between his shoulders behind, gathering into it a little of the gown for hold: the fingers of his left hand he thrusted under the sash before, and the man puting his two thumbs into that hand, he locked all together, by closing his hand. Then he

deliberately said, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* and while he uttered these words standing wide, he gently leaned him backward, and dipped him once. As soon as he had raised him, a person in a boat fastened there for the purpose, took hold of the man's hand, wiped his face with a napkin, and led him a few steps to another attendant, who then gave his arm, walked with him to the house, and assisted him to dress. There were many such in waiting, who like the primitive susceptors, assisted during the whole service. The rest of the men followed the first, and were baptized in like manner. After them the women were baptized. A female friend took off at the water side the hat and cloak. A deacon of the church led one to the administrator, and another from him; and a woman at the waterside took each as she came out of the river, and conducted her to the apartment in the house, where they dressed themselves. When all were baptized, the administrator coming up out of the river, and standing at the side, gave a short exhortation on the honour and the pleasure of obedience to divine commands, and then with the usual benediction dismissed the assembly. About half an hour after, the men newly baptized, having dressed themselves, went from their room into a large hall in the house, where they

were presently joined by the women, who came from their apartments to the same place. Then they sent a messenger to the administrator, who was dressing in his apartment, to inform him they waited for him. He presently came, and first prayed for a few minutes, and then closed the whole by a short discourse on the blessings of civil and religious liberty, the sufficiency of Scripture, the pleasures of a good conscience, the importance of a holy life, and the prospect of a blessed immortality. This they call a *public* baptism."

A more *private* baptism takes place after a similar manner in *baptisteries*, which are in or near the places of worship; thus every convenience is afforded for the purpose. This, indeed, is now the most common way of administering the ordinance among the Baptists, either with the attendance of friends or in the presence of the congregation. Such is *baptism by immersion*, and thus conducted, it must be pronounced significant in its nature, and impressive in its tendency. It is however, to be wished, that the rite was on *every* occasion administered with equal solemnity.

The propriety of the exclusive appellation of the term *Baptists* to those who baptize *adults by immersion*, has been questioned. Hence they are by many stiled *Anti-pædobaptists*,

merely as opposing the validity of infant baptism. An account of the manner in which *infant baptism* is administered, should have been added, were it not so well known by its general practice, both in the Established Church and among Dissenters.

The three denominations of *Protestant Dissenters* have seminaries of their own, where young men designed for the Christian ministry are educated. Amongst the Presbyterians are to be reckoned the academies at Manchester, and Caermarthen, in South Wales; besides six exhibitions granted by Dr. Daniel Williams, to English Presbyterian students, to be educated at Glasgow. Among the Independents are to be mentioned the academies at Wymondley House near Hitchin, Homerton, Wrexham, and Hoxton. There is also an academy of Lady Huntingdon's, formerly at Trevecka, now at Cheshunt. The Baptists have two exhibitions for students to be educated at one of the universities in Scotland, given them by Dr. Ward, of Gresham College, the author of *The System of Oratory*.* There is likewise an academy at Bristol, generally

* As the author of this little work stands indebted to the Exhibition of *Dr. John Ward*, he wishes to pay a grateful tribute of respect to his memory. He was the son of a Dissenting minister, and born about 1679, in London. He kept an

known by the name of *The Bristol Education Society*, over which the late Dr. Caleb Evans and his venerable father, the Rev. Hugh Evans, A. M. presided for many years with great respectability. *A similar institution*, though upon a much smaller scale, has been formed among the *General Baptists*, which it is to be hoped will meet with due encouragement. They could formerly boast of a *Gale*, a *Foster*, a *Burroughs*, a *Foot*, a *Noble*, and a *Bulkely*. A learned education lays the foundation for a respectable Christian ministry. In Dr. Kippis's *Life of Dr. Doddridge*, prefixed to the seventh edition of his *Family Expositor*, will be found an account of the general mode of education for ministers among the Dissenters.

Mr. Palmer, in his *Nonconformist's Memorial*, speaking of Dr. Daniel Williams, says—" He

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academy for many years in Tenter Alley, Moorfields. In 1720, he was chosen professor of Rhetoric in Gresham College, where his *System of Oratory* was delivered. In 1723, during the Presidency of Sir Isaac Newton, he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society: and in 1752, chosen one of its Vice-Presidents, in which office he continued till his death, which happened at Gresham College, October 17, 1758, in the eightieth year of his age. He published many learned works; and is allowed by all who *knew* him, to have been a character in which were united a diffusive benevolence and a rational piety.

gave the bulk of his estate to charitable uses, as excellent in their nature as various in their kinds, and as much calculated for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, as any that have ever been known. He left his library for public use, and ordered a convenient place to be purchased or erected, in which the books might be properly disposed of, and left an annuity for a librarian. A commodious house was accordingly erected in *Redcross-street*, *Cripplegate*, where his collection of books is not only properly preserved, but has been gradually receiving large additions. This is also the place in which the body of dissenting ministers meet to transact their business, and is a kind of repository for paintings of Nonconformist ministers, for MSS. and other matters of curiosity or utility." The building itself belongs to the *Presbyterians*, but it is by the trustees handsomely devoted to the use of the dissenters in general. The library, in *Redcross-street*, since its original endowment, has been augmented by the donations of liberal minded persons, and its increase depends upon their zeal: no part of the founder's estate being appropriated for the purpose. Were every dissenting author to send thither a copy of his publications (a measure that has been recommended and ought to be adopted) the collection would soon receive a considerable augmentation, and of course increase not

only in extent but also in respectability. A second edition of the catalogue, in one volume, octavo, has been lately published, with the rules respecting the use of it, prefixed.

Near to this spot also stands *Sion College*, founded by Dr. Thomas White, and of which a particular account is given in Northouck's *History of London*. Here the *London clergy* meet to transact their affairs, and it is enriched with an extensive library, and ample endowments.

To the foregoing *systematical* distribution of the several denominations, shall be added a FEW SECTS, which cannot be classed with propriety under any one of the *three* general divisions which have been adopted.

The QUAKERS appeared in England about the year 1650. Their origin will be best given in their own words;—"The beginning of the seventeenth century is known to have been a time of great dissention in England respecting religion. Many pious persons had been dissatisfied with the settlement of the Church of England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Various societies of Dissenters had accordingly arisen; some of whom evinced their sincerity by grievous sufferings under the intolerance of those who governed church affairs.* But these societies, notwithstanding

* Sewell, p. 5, 6. Ed. 1722.

their honest zeal, seemed to have stopped short in their progress towards a complete reformation;* and, degenerating into formality, to have left their most enlightened members still to lament the want of something more instructive and consolatory to the soul, than the most rigorous observance of their ordinances had ever produced. Thus dissatisfied and disconsolate, they were ready to follow any teacher who seemed able to direct them to that light and peace of which they felt the need. Many such in succession engaged their attention; until finding the insufficiency of them all, they withdrew from the communion of every visible church, and dwelt retired, and attentive to the inward state of their own minds: often deeply distressed for the want of that true knowledge of God, which they saw to be necessary for salvation, and for which, according to their ability, they fervently prayed. These sincere breathings of spirit being answered by the extension of some degree of heavenly consolation, they became convinced, that as the heart of man is the scene of the tempter's attacks, it must also be that of the Redeemer's victory. With renewed fervency, therefore, they sought his appearance in their minds; and thus being renewedly furnished with his saving light and help,

* Penn, vol. 5. p. 211, 212. Ed. 1782.

they not only became instructed in the things pertaining to their own salvation, but they discovered many practices in the world, which have a shew of religion, to be nevertheless the effect of the unsubjected will of man, and inconsistent with the genuine simplicity of the truth.

George Fox* was one of the first of our Friends who was imprisoned. He was confined at Nottingham in the year 1649, for having publicly opposed a preacher, who had asserted that the more sure word of prophecy, mentioned 2 Pet. i. 19. was the Scripture; George Fox declaring that it was the Holy Spirit: and in the following year, being brought before two justices in Derbyshire, one of them, scoffing at G. Fox, for having bidden him, and those about him, tremble at the word of the Lord, gave to our predecessors the name of *Quakers;*† ‡ an appellation which soon became and hath remained our most usual denomination; but they themselves adopted, and have transmitted to us, the endearing appellation of *Friends.*"§

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* Besse's Sufferings of the People called Quakers, ch. 6. & 29. et passim.

† Bess. Suff. 29. ‡ Sewell, 35.

§ See *A Summary of the History, Doctrine, and Discipline of Friends, written at the Desire of the Meeting for Sufferings in London.* This pamphlet is just republished at the end of a cu-

It is difficult to give a specific statement of ther tenets; but they may be found in a well-written Apology by Robert Barclay, a learned Quaker, who died in Scotland, 1690. George Fox, the founder of this sect, was born 1624. He exhibited few articles of faith, and insisted mostly on morality, mutual charity, and the love of God. The religion and worship he recommended were simple and without ceremonies. To wait in profound silence for *the influence of the Spirit*, was one of the chief points he inculcated. "The tenor of his doctrine," says Mr. Gough, "when he found himself concerned to instruct others, was to wean men from systems, ceremonies, and the outside of religion, in every form, and to lead them to an acquantance with themselves, by a most solicitous attention to what passed in their own minds; to direct them to a principle in their own hearts, which, if duly attended to, could introduce rectitude of mind,

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rious work, entitled, *A Refutation of some of the more Modern Misrepresentations of the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, with a Life of James Naylor. By Joseph Gurney Bevan.* Dr. Toulmin, in his *new* edition of *Neal's History of the Puritans*, has taken great pains to give the public just ideas of the Quakers; it does honour to his impartiality. See also Dr. A. Rees's valuable and improved edition of Chambers's Encyclopædia, on the subject.

simplicity of manners, a life and conversation adorned with every virtue."

The Quakers have places of worship, where they regularly assemble on the Sabbath, though frequently without vocal prayer, or any religious or practical exhortation. They reject water baptism and the Lord's Supper—have no distinct order of ministers, though their speakers are under certain regulations—and are firm advocates of the Arminian system of doctrine, so far at least as respects the universal love of God to man, in order to his salvation.

Their internal government is much admired; their own poor are supported without parochial aid, and their industry and sobriety are deserving of imitation. They also reprobate the destructive practice of war, the infamous traffic of slaves, and profess their abhorrence of religious persecution. Refusing to pay tithes, they suffer the loss of their goods and of their liberty, rather than comply with the demand, and their losses are emphatically termed by them *sufferings*. Many have endured long imprisonments on that account. As the Quakers cannot be made to take an oath in a court of justice, their affirmation is permitted in all civil, but not in criminal cases. In the tyrannical reign of the Stuarts, *the Friends* suffered in common with the Puritans, the severest persecution. Even the famous William

Penn was tried at the Old Bailey; and the trial, to be found in his works, is highly honourable to his legal knowledge, fortitude, and integrity.

With regard to the resurrection of the body, they have deemed it more safe not to determine how or when we shall be raised, yet they have a firm belief in a resurrection of the dead, and in a future state of retribution.

Sewell, in his History of the Society, expresses himself decidedly in behalf of a resurrection, but without determining the mode in which infinite wisdom may preserve a consciousness of identity in another stage of our existence; and Barclay, in his confession and catechism, used only the words of scripture on the subject, without expressing the manner in which he understood them. The same remark applies to Barclay's account of the divinity of Christ; but it seems, that William Penn was more explicit on the subject; and no writer of acknowledged reputation among them, has admitted any distinction of *persons* in the Deity. In Penn's *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, he speaks with freedom against many doctrines which are held in general estimation. The title of the book speaks for itself, and shall be transcribed—"The Sandy Foundation Shaken, or those so generally believed and applauded doctrines, of one God subsisting in three distinct and separate persons; the impossibility of

God's pardoning sin without a plenary satisfaction; the qualification of impure persons by an imputative righteousness, refuted from the authority of scripture testimonies and right reason."

It appears that Mr. Penn having in this work reprobated the leading doctrines of Calvinism, a violent outcry was raised against him. He therefore vindicated himself in a pamphlet, called *Innocency with her Open Face*, in which he says—"As for my being a *Socinian*, I must confess I have read of one *Socinus*, of (what they call) a noble family in Sene, Italy, who about the year 1574, being a young man, voluntarily did abandon the glories, pleasures, and honours of the Great Duke of Tuscany's court at Florence (that noted place for all worldly delicacies) and became a perpetual exile for his conscience, whose parts, wisdom, gravity, and just behaviour, made him the most famous with the Polonian and Transylvanian churches; but I was never baptized into *his* name, and therefore deny that reproachful epithet, and if in any thing I acknowledge the verity of his doctrine, it is for the truth's sake of which, in many things, he had a clearer prospect than most of his contemporaries; but not therefore a Socinian any more than a son of the English church, whilst esteemed a Quaker, because *I* justify many of *her* principles since the Reformation against the Roman church." But we

will add another paragraph, where Mr. Penn's principles are epitomised. "And to shut up my apology for religious matters, that all may see the simplicity, scripture doctrine, and phrase of my faith, in the most important matters of eternal life, I shall here subjoin a short *confession*.

"I sincerely own and unfeignedly believe (by virtue of the sound knowledge and experience received from the gift of that holy unction and divine grace inspired from on high) in one holy, just, merciful almighty and eternal God, who is the Father of all things; that appeared to the holy patriarchs and prophets of old, at sundry times and in divers manners—and in one Lord Jesus Christ the everlasting Wisdom, divine Power, true Light, only Saviour and Preserver of all; the same one holy, just, merciful, almighty, and eternal God, who in the fullness of time took and was manifest in the flesh, at which time he preached (and his disciples after him) the everlasting gospel of repentance, and promise of remission of sins, and eternal life to all that heard and obeyed, who said, he that is with you (in the flesh) shall be in you (by the spirit); and though he left them (as to the flesh) yet not comfortless, for he would come to them again (in the spirit) for a little while, and they should not see him (as to the flesh); again, a little while, and they should see him (in the spirit); for the Lord

(Jesus Christ) is that Spirit, a manifestation whereof is given to every one, to profit with all —in which *Holy Spirit*, I believe, as the same almighty and eternal God, who, as in those times, he eluded all shadows, and became the infallible guide to them that walked therein, by which they were adopted heirs and co-heirs of glory; so am I a living witness, that the same holy, just, merciful, almighty, and eternal God, is now, as then (after this tedious night of idolatry, superstition, and human inventions, that hath overspread the world) gloriously manifested, to discover and save from all iniquity, and to conduct unto the holy land of pure and endless peace; in a word, to tabernacle in men. And I also firmly believe, that without repenting and forsaking of past sins, and walking in obedience to this heavenly voice, which would guide into all truth, and establish there, remission and eternal life, can never be obtained; but unto them that fear his name and keep his commandments, *they*, and *they only*, shall have a right unto the tree of life, for whose name's sake, I have been made willing to relinquish and forsake all the vain fashions, enticing pleasures, alluring honours, and glittering glories of this transitory world, and readily to accept the portion of a fool from this deriding generation, and become a man of sorrow, and a perpetual reproach to my familiars; yea, and with the greatest

cheerfulness, can obsignate and confirm (with no less seal, than the loss of whatsoever this doating world accounts dear) this faithful confession; having my eye fixed upon a more enduring substance and lasting inheritance, and being most infallibly assured, that when time shall be no more, I shall (if faithful hereunto) possess the mansions of eternal life, and be received into his everlasting habitation of rest and glory."

This is an explicit declaration of the principles of Quakerism; it is taken from the works of *William Penn*; because of all their writers, he is in general the most perspicuous, and as to his character, he possesses the highest respectability.

Indeed, there seems to be a much greater uniformity in their dress than in their opinions, tho' it is probable that the generality of them adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. As a proof of the diversity of opinion amongst them, we may refer to the late proceedings of the society against *Hannah Barnard*, a celebrated speaker from Hudson, in North America. For her opinion concerning the Jewish Wars, Trinity, Miraculous Conception, &c. she has been silenced. [See an *Appeal to the Friends*, in three parts, on which, however, some animadversions have been published by *Vindex* and others.*

* We are extremely sorry to perceive such proceedings amongst a body hitherto distinguished for their love of tolera-

There are seven yearly meetings among them, viz. 1. London, to which come representatives from Ireland; 2. New England; 3. New York; 4. Pennsylvania and New Jersey; 5. Maryland; 6. Virginia; 7. The Carolinas and Georgia. The form and colour of their clothes, together with their peculiar modes of salutation, have been thought to savour of affectation, though they certainly exhibit a striking contrast to the gaudy frippery and artificial courtesy of modern times. Voltaire, in his Letters on the English Nation, has some curious remarks on the Quakers; but in certain particulars they deem themselves calumniated by that satirical writer. At Ackworth they have a respectable school, to which (a great and good man) Dr. Fothergill left legacies, and where about one hundred and eighty boys and one hundred and twenty girls are educated. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, William Penn, who founded Pennsylvania, introduced and established a large and flourishing colony of them in America. His treaty with the Indians on that occasion, has formed an admirable subject for

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tion. We used to think the Quakers abhorred every thing which bore the most distant resemblance to persecution, and we still indulge the hope, that laying aside all prejudice and passion, they will return to that *perfect freedom* of sentiment, which constitutes the glory of unadulterated Christianity.

the pencil, and reflects immortal honour on his memory.

I have thus endeavoured to state at some length the doctrines and views of *Quakerism*, because its advocates have been subjected to gross misrepresentations. Many have said they are *a species of Deists*, exalting their natural light above the scripture, which some of them have called a dead letter—others have deemed them a kind of *Enthusiasts*, violently enslaved by their impulses and feelings—whilst a third class have considered them, notwithstanding their professions respecting the spirit, as *worldly minded*, eagerly intent on the acquisition of property, and thus commanding the good things of this present world. Persons who entertain either of these opinions concerning them, will perceive from the above account, that though their sentiments are very peculiar, as are also their manners, yet we have every reason to suppose them sincere in their professions, and upon the whole, steadily governed by the prospects of another world. Allowances ought to be made for human infirmity. Nor must we expect from man more than it is in his power to perform. *Every* individual of *every* sect, has an indubitable right to form his own opinions on religious subjects. And let him freely indulge those opinions which (however absurd in the eyes of others) may to *him* appear

consonant to truth; whilst he holds sacred the peace and happiness of society.

The METHODISTS in this country form a large part of the community. In the year 1729, they sprang up at Oxford, under Mr. Morgan (who soon after died) and Mr. John Wesley. In the month of November, of that year, the latter being then fellow of Lincoln College, began to spend some evenings in reading the Greek New Testament along with Charles Wesley, student, Mr. Morgan, commoner, of Christ Church, and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College. Next year, two or three of the pupils of Mr. John Wesley, and one pupil of Mr. Charles Wesley, obtained leave to attend these meetings. Two years after, they were joined by Mr. Ingham, of Queen's College, Mr. Broughton, of Exeter, and Mr. James Hervey; and in 1735, they were joined by the celebrated Mr. Whitfield, then in his eighteenth year. They soon obtained the name of *Methodists*, from the exact regularity of their lives; which gave occasion to a young gentleman, of Christ Church, to say—"Here is a new set of *Methodists* sprung up!" Alluding to a sect of ancient Physicians, who practised medicine by *method* or regular rules, in opposition to quackery or empiricism. Thus was the term *Methodist* originally applied to this body of Christians, on account of the

methodical strictness of their lives; but is indeed now, by some, indiscriminately appropriated to every individual who manifests a more than ordinary concern for the salvation of mankind.

These heads differing soon afterwards in religious sentiment, their respective followers distributed themselves into two parties; the one under Mr. George Whitfield, the other under Mr. John and Charles Wesley. Educated at Oxford, these leaders still continued to profess an attachment to the articles and liturgy of the Established church, though they more commonly adopted the mode of worship which prevails among the Dissenters. Upon their being excluded from the pulpits in many churches, they took to preaching in the fields; and from the novelty of the thing, in conjunction with the fervour of their exertions, they were attended by some *thousands* of people! In their public labours, Mr. Whitfield having a most sonorous voice, was remarkable for an engaging and powerful eloquence; whilst Mr. John Wesley, being less under the influence of his passions, possessed both in writing and preaching, a perspicuous and commanding simplicity. Even their enemies, confess that they contributed in several places to reform the lower classes of the community. The *Colliers* at Kingswood, near Bristol, and the *Tinners* in Cornwall, were greatly benefitted by their exertions. In consequence of their

attention to the religion of Jesus, by the instrumentality of these preachers, many of them rose to a degree of respectability, and became valuable members of society. The followers of Mr. Wesley (who died in London, 1791, aged eighty-eight, and was buried in the ground behind his chapel, the Foundery, in Moorfields) are *Arminians*, though some of his preachers incline to *Baxterianism*. The followers of Mr. Whitfield (who died in 1770, aged fifty-six, at Newbury Port, near Boston, in New England, and was buried there) are *Calvinists*, and were warmly patronized by the late Countess Dowager of Huntingdon, to whom Mr. W. was chaplain, and who was a lady of great benevolence and piety. Lady Erskine (a near relation of the celebrated Counsellor of that name) has taken her situation, and is said to be equally attentive to the concerns of this part of the religious community. With respect to the splitting of the Methodists into Calvinists and Arminians, it happened so far back as the year 1741 ; the former being for particular, and the latter for universal redemption.

Both Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield were indefatigable in promoting their own views of the Christian religion, notwithstanding all the reproaches with which they were stigmatized. It is well known, that for this purpose they went

over several times to America. Mr. Whitfield, indeed, established an Orphan House in Georgia, for which he made large collections in this country, and which was since converted into a college for the education of young men, designed chiefly for the ministry.*

In America, the Methodists were extremely useful, riding 20 or 30 miles in the course of the day, and preaching twice or thrice to considerable congregations. The account of their labours by Mr. Hampson, in his memoirs of Mr. Wesley, is interesting and impressive. "Their excursions (says he) through immense forests, abounding in trees of all sorts and sizes, were often highly romantic. Innumerable rivers and falls of water; vistas opening to the view, in contrast with the uncultivated wild; deer now shooting across the road, and now scouring through the woods, while the eye was frequently relieved by the appearance of orchards and plantations, and the houses of gentlemen and farmers peeping through the trees, formed a scenery so various and picturesque, as to produce *a variety of reflections*, and present, we will not say to a philo-

* To this paragraph, the American editor of the Sketch has added—"It has been lately burnt, and the whole of the benefice added to it, is in possession of the State. A just judgment for purchasing slaves to support a charitable institution!"

sophic eye, but to the mind of *every reasonable creature*, the most sublime and agreeable images. Their worship partook of the general simplicity. It was frequently conducted in the open air. The woods resounded to the voice of the preacher, or to the singing of his numerous congregation, whilst the horses fastened to the trees, formed a singular addition to the solemnity. It was, indeed, a striking picture, and might naturally impress the mind with a retrospect of the antediluvian days, when the hills and vallies re-echoed the patriarchal devotions, and a Seth or an Enoch, in the shadow of a projecting rock, or beneath the foliage of some venerable oak, delivered his primeval lectures, and was *a preacher of righteousness to the people!*"

The distinguishing principles of Methodism, are *salvation by faith in Jesus Christ; perceptible, and in some cases instantaneous conversion;* and an *assurance* of reconciliation to God, with which they say, the *new birth*, or *being born again*, is inseparably attended. On these doctrines they lay the utmost stress; and information respecting these topics, will be found in Dr. Haweis's *History of the Church of Christ*, recently published.* Several persons have writ-

* This work, it is to be regretted, is sadly deficient in references to authorities, the *soul* and *substance* of history.

ten the Life of Mr. Wesley; there is one by Mr. Hampson, another by Dr. Whitehead, and a third by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moor. Mr. Whitfield's life was drawn up by the late Dr. Gillies, of Glasgow. Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield both published an account of their travels and itinerant labours in this kingdom and in America. These Sketches are entitled *Journals*, and serve greatly to illustrate the principles and progress of Methodism. To conclude this article of the *Methodists*, in the words of Mr. Hampson, in his *Memoirs* of Mr. Wesley—"If they possess not much knowledge, which however we do not know to be the case, it is at least certain they are not deficient in zeal, and without any passionate desire to imitate their example, we may at least commend their endeavours for the general good. Every good man will contemplate with pleasure, the operation of the spirit of reformation, whether foreign or domestic, and will rejoice in every attempt to propagate Christianity in the barbarous parts of the world; an attempt, which if in any tolerable degree successful, will do infinitely more for their civilization and happiness, than all the united energies of the philosophical infidels; those boasted benefactors of mankind."

Dr. Priestley published a curious volume of Mr. Wesley's Letters, just after his decease, pre-

faced with a sensible Address to the Methodists; where, after having freely expostulated with them respecting their peculiarities, he gives them great credit for their zeal and unwearied activity. The *Methodists* have recently found an eloquent advocate in William Wilberforce, Esq. M. P. who pleads their cause at some length, in his Treatise on *Vital Christianity*.*

† The New Methodist Connection, among the followers of Mr. Wesley, separated from the original Methodists in 1797. The grounds of this separation, they declare to be *church government*, and not doctrines, as affirmed by some of their opponents. They object to the old Methodists, for having formed a hierarchy or priestly corporation; and say that in so doing, they have robbed the people of those privileges, that as members of a Christian church

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* This work has been ably animadverted upon by the Rev. T. Belsham, in a *Series of Letters* to the author, in which most of its positions are controverted. And with respect to the article of *Hereditary Depravity*, for which Mr. W. zealously contends—See an ingenious *Apology for Human Nature*, by the late venerable and learned Charles Bulkley.

† This article was sent the editor by a correspondent at Nottingham, and is inserted with a few alterations and omissions.

they are entitled to by reason and scripture. The *new Methodists* have therefore attempted to establish every part of their church government on popular principles, and profess to have united as much as possible the ministers and the people in every department of it. This is quite contrary to the original government of the Methodists, which in the most important cases, is confined only to the ministers. This, indeed, appears most plainly, when their conference or yearly meeting is considered; for in this meeting, no person, who is not a *travelling preacher*, has ever been suffered to enter as a member of it. And, indeed, this is the point to which the preachers have always stedfastly adhered with the utmost firmness and resolution, and on which the division at present entirely rests. They are also upbraided by the new Methodists, for having abused the power they have assumed; a great many of *these* abuses, the new Methodists have formally protested against, which are enumerated in various publications, and particularly in the *Preface* to *the Life* of one of their deceased friends, Mr. *Alexander Kilham*.

Though these are the points on which the division seems principally to have rested, yet there are several other things that have contributed to it. It is frequently easy to foresee and to calculate the future changes in society, that the lapse

of time will produce; and in no instance is this observation better warranted than in this division, which most persons have long expected. The old attachment of the Methodists to the Established Church, which originated in Mr. Wesley, and was cherished by him and many of the preachers by all possible means, and also the dislike to these sentiments in many others of the preachers and of the societies, were never failing subjects of contention. As all parties are distinguished in their contests by some badge or discriminating circumstance, so here *the receiving* or *not receiving* the Lord's Supper, in the *Established Church*, was long considered as the criterion of methodistical zeal or disaffection. Thus the rupture that had been long foreseen by intelligent persons, and for which the minds of the Methodists had been undesignedly prepared, became inevitable when Mr. Wesley's influence no longer interfered. Soon after Mr. Wesley's death, many things had a tendency to displease the societies, and bring forward the division. Many petitions having been sent by the societies to the preachers, requesting to have the Lord's Supper administered to them in their own chapels, the people had the mortification to find that this question was decided by *lot*, and not by the use of reason and serious discussion!

The *new Methodists* profess to proceed upon

liberal, open, and ingenuous principles, in the construction of their plan of church government, and their ultimate decision in all disputed matters, is in their popular annual assembly, chosen by certain rules from among the preachers and societies. These professions are at least general and liberal; but as this sect has yet continued for only a short season, little can be said of it at present. It becomes matter of curious conjecture and speculation, how far the leading persons among them, will act agreeably to their present liberal professions. If they should become firmly established in power and influence, and have the opportunity of acting otherwise; they have at least the advantage of the example of their late brethren, and of Dr. Priestley's remarks upon them. Speaking of the leading men among the Methodists, the Doctor says—"Finding themselves by degrees at the head of a large body of people, and in considerable power and influence, they must not have been *men*, if they had not felt the love of power gratified in such a situation; and they must have been *more than men*, if their subsequent conduct had not been influenced by it." A shrewd hint, that Dr. P. thought the Methodists had been too remiss in their attention to their liberties, *which they ought to convey down entire and unmutilated to posterity.*

JUMPERS.—Originally this singular practice of *jumping* during the time allotted for religious worship and instruction, was confined to the people called Methodists in Wales, the followers of Harris, Rowland, Williams, and others. The practice began in the western part of the country about the year 1760. It was soon after defended by Mr. William Williams (the Welch poet, as he is sometimes styled) in a pamphlet, which was patronized by the abettors of jumping in religious assemblies, and viewed by the seniors and the grave with disapprobation. However, in the course of a few years, the advocates of groaning and loud talking, as well as loud singing, repeating the same line or stanza over and over thirty or forty times, became more numerous, and were found among some of the other denominations in the principality, and continue to this day. Several of the more zealous itinerant preachers in Wales recommended the people to cry out *Gogoniant* (the Welch word for *glory*) *Amen*, &c. &c. to put themselves in violent agitations; and finally, to *jump* until they were quite exhausted, so as often to be obliged to fall down on the floor or the field where this kind of worship was held. If any thing in the profession of religion, that is absurd and unreasonable, were to surprize us, it would be the censure that was cast upon those who gently attempted to stem this tide, which

threatened the destruction of true religion as a *reasonable service*. Where the essence of true religion is placed in customs and usages which have no tendency to sanctify the several powers through the medium of the understanding, we ought not to be surprized, when we contemplate instances of extravagance and *apostacy*. Human nature, in general, is not capable of such exertions for any length of time, and when the spirits become exhausted, and the heat kindled by sympathy is subsided, the unhappy persons sink into themselves, and seek for support in intoxication. It is not to be doubted but there are many sincere and pious persons to be found among this body of people—men who think they are doing God's service, whilst they are the victims of fanaticism. These are objects of compassion, and doubtless will find it in God. But it is certain, from incontestible facts, that a number of persons have attached themselves to those religious societies, who place a very disproportioned stress on the practice of *jumping*, from suspicious motives. The theory and practice of such a religion are easily understood; for the man who possesses an unblushing confidence, and the greatest degree of muscular energy, is likely to excel in bodily exercise. Upon the whole, it is probable, as such an exercise has no countenance in reason nor revelation, that it has been, and is still productive

of more evil than good. Many of the ministers, who have been foremost in encouraging *jumping*, seemed to have nothing in view but the gratification of their vanity, inflaming the passions of the multitude by extravagant representations of the character of the Deity—the condition of man—and design of the Saviour's mission. The minister that wishes *not to study* to shew himself of God, has only to favour *jumping* with its appendages; for as reason is out of the question, in such a religion, *he* can be under no fear of shocking it. It is some consolation to real religion, to add, that this practice is on the decline, as the more sober or conscientious, who were at first at a loss to judge where this practice might carry them, have seen its pernicious tendency.

Such is the account of the JUMPERS, which, with a few alterations, has been transmitted me by a respectable minister, who frequently visits the principality. It is to be hoped, that the exercise of common sense will in time recover them from these extravagant ecstasies, which pain the rational friends of revelation, and afford matter of exultation to the advocates of infidelity.

About the year 1785, I myself happened very accidentally to be present at a meeting, which terminated in *jumping*. It was held in the open air, on a Sunday evening, near Newport, in Monmouthshire. The preacher was one of Lady

Huntingdon's students, who concluded his sermon with the recommendation of *jumping*; and to allow him the praise of consistency, he got down from the chair on which he stood, and jumped along with them. The arguments he adduced for this purpose were, that David danced before the ark—that the babe leaped in the womb of Elizabeth—and that the man whose lameness was removed, *leaped* and praised God for the mercy which he had received. He expatiated on these topics with uncommon fervency, and then drew the inference, that *they* ought to shew *similar expressions* of joy, for the blessings which Jesus Christ had put into their possession. He then gave an empassioned sketch of the sufferings of the Saviour, and hereby roused the passions of a few around him into a state of violent agitation. About nine men and seven women, for some little time, rocked to and fro, groaned aloud, and then *jumped* with a kind of frantic fury. Some of the audience flew in all directions; others gazed on in silent amazement! They all gradually dispersed, except the *jumpers*, who continued their exertions from eight in the evening to near eleven at night. I saw the conclusion of it; they at last kneeled down in a circle, holding each other by the hand, while one of them prayed with great fervor, and then *all* rising up from off their knees, departed. But previous to

their dispersion, they wildly pointed up towards the sky, and reminded one another that they should soon meet *there*, and be *never* again separated! I quitted the spot with astonishment. Such disorderly scenes cannot be of any service to the deluded individuals, nor prove beneficial to society. Whatever credit we may and ought to allow this body of Christians for good intentions, it is impossible not to speak of the practice itself, without adopting terms of unqualified disapprobation. The reader is referred to *Bingley's* and *Evan's Tours through Wales*, where (as many particulars are detailed respecting the *Jumpers*) his curiosity will receive a still farther gratification. It pains the author of the present work, that he had it not in his power to give a more favourable account of them. The decline of so unbecoming a practice will, it is to be hoped, be soon followed by its utter extinction.

The UNIVERSALISTS, properly so called, are those who believe, that as Christ died for all, so, before he shall have delivered up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, *all* shall be brought to a participation of the benefits of his death, in their restoration to holiness and happiness. Their scheme includes a reconciliation of the tenets of Calvinism and Arminianism, by uniting the leading doctrines of both, as far as they

are found in the scriptures: from which union they think the sentiment of universal restoration naturally flows.

Thus they reason—"The Arminian proves from scripture, that God is love; that he is good to all; that his tender mercy is over all his works; that he gave his son for the world; that Christ died for the world, even for the whole world; and that God will have all men to be saved."

"The Calvinist proves also from scripture, that God is without variableness or shadow of turning; that his love, like himself, alters not; that the death of Christ will be efficacious towards all for whom it was intended; that God will perform all his pleasure, and that his council shall stand. The union of these scriptural principles, is the final restoration of all men.

"Taking the principles of the Calvinists and Arminians separately, we find the former teaching, or at least inferring, that God *doth* not love all; but that he made the greater part of men to be endless monuments of his wrath. The latter declaring the love of God to all; but admitting his *final failure* of restoring the greater part. The God of the former, is great in power and wisdom; but deficient in goodness, and capricious in his conduct: who that views this character can sincerely love it? The God of the latter,

is exceeding good; but deficient in power and wisdom: who can trust such a being? If, therefore, both Calvinists and Arminians love and trust the Deity, it is not under the character which their several systems ascribe to him; but they are constrained to hide the imperfections which their views cast upon him, and boast of a God, of whose *highest glory*, their several schemes will not admit."

The Universalists teach the doctrine of *election;* but not in the exclusive Calvinistic sense of it; they suppose that God has chosen some, for the good of all; and that his final purpose towards all, is intimated by his calling his elect the *first* born and the *first* fruits of his creatures, which, say they, implies other branches of his family, and a future ingathering of the harvest of mankind.

They teach also that the righteous shall have part in the first resurrection, shall be blessed and happy, and be made priests and kings to God and to Christ in the millennial kingdom, and that over them the second death shall have no power; that the wicked will receive a punishment apportioned to their crimes, that punishment itself is a mediatorial work, and founded upon mercy, consequently, that it is a means of humbling, subduing, and finally reconciling the sinner to God.

They add, that the words rendered *everlasting*,

eternal, *for ever*, and *for ever and ever*, in the scriptures, are frequently used to express the duration of things that have ended, or must end: and if it is contended, that these words are sometimes used to express *proper eternity*, they answer, that then, the *subject* with which the words are connected, must determine the sense of them; and as there is nothing in the nature of future punishment which can be rendered as a reason why it should be endless, they infer that the above words ought always to be taken in a limited sense, when connected with the infliction of misery.

The Universalists have to contend on the one hand with such as hold with the eternity of future misery, and on the other with those who teach that *destruction or extinction of being*, will be the final state of the wicked. In answer to the latter, they say, "That before we admit that God is under the necessity of striking any of his rational creatures out of being, we ought to pause, and enquire,

"Whether such an act is consistent with the scriptural character of Deity, as possessed of all possible wisdom, goodness, and power?

"Whether it would not contradict many parts of scripture; such, for instance, as speak of the restitution of all things—the gathering together of all things in Christ—the reconciliation of all

things to the Father, by the blood of the cross—the destruction of death, &c." These texts, they think, are opposed equally to endless misery, and to final destruction.

"Whether those who will be finally destroyed, are not in a worse state through the mediation of Christ, than they would have been without it? This question is founded on a position of the friends of destruction; viz. that extinction of being, without a resurrection, would have been the only punishment of sin, if Christ had not become the resurrection and the life to men. Consequently, the resurrection and future punishment spring from the system of mediation; but, they ask, is the justification to life, which came upon all men in Christ Jesus, nothing more than a resurrection to endless death to millions?

"Whether the word, *destruction*, will warrant such a conclusion? It is evident that destruction is often used in scripture to signify a cessation of present existence only, without any contradiction of the promises that relate to a future universal resurrection. They think, therefore, that they ought to admit an universal restoration of men, notwithstanding the future destruction which is threatened to sinners:* because, say they, the scripture teach both."

* See Vidler's Notes on Winchester's Dialogues on the Restoration, fourth edition, p. 176.

They suppose the universal doctrine to be most consonant to the perfections of the Deity—most worthy of the character of Christ, as the mediator; and that the scriptures cannot be made consistent with themselves upon any other plan. They teach that ardent love to God, peace, meekness, candour, and universal love to men, are the natural result of their views.

This doctrine is not new. Origen, a Christian father, who lived in the third century, wrote in favour of it. St Augustine, of Hippo, mentions some divines in his day, whom he calls the merciful doctors, who held it. The German Baptists, many of them, even before the reformation, propagated it. The people called Tunkers, in America, descended from the German Baptists, mostly hold it. The Menonites, in Holland, have long held it. In England, about the latter end of the seventeenth century, Dr. Rust, Bishop of Dromore, in Ireland, published a piece in defence of it. And Mr. Jeremiah White wrote his book in favour of the same sentiment soon afterwards. The Chevalier Ramsay, in his elaborate work of the Philosophical principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, espouses it. Archbishop Tillotson, in one of his sermons, supposes future punishment to be of limited duration, as does Dr. Burnet, master of the Charter House, in his book on the state of the dead.

But the writers of late years, who have treated upon the subject most fully, are Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bristol, in his Dissertations; Mr Stonehouse, Rector of Islington: Dr. Chauncy, of Boston, in America; Dr. Hartley, in his profound Work on Man; Mr. Purves, of Edinburg; Mr. Elhanan Winchester, in his Dialogues on Universal Restoration (a new edition of which, with explanatory notes, has been recently published) and Mr. William Vidler. See the *Universalist's Miscellany* (a monthly publication of merit) from the first to the fourth volume, where the controversy on the subject between Mr. Vidler, Mr. Fuller, and Mr. Fisher, will be found. The Rev. Mr. Browne, also a clergyman of the church of England, has written an excellent essay on the subject. Mr. N. Scarlett has likewise published a new translation of the Testament, in which the Greek term αιον in the singular and plural, is rendered *age* and *ages*; and in his Appendix has proposed that its derivative αιονιαν should be rendered *age-lasting*, instead of everlasting and eternal.

The writers, who have of late particularly animadverted upon the doctrine are, in America, President Edwards and his son, Dr. Edwards; and in England, Mr. Dan. Taylor, Mr. Fisher, and Mr. Andrew Fuller.*

* For most of the above account of the *Universalists*, the author is indebted to a popular minister of that persuasion;

Mr. Broughton, at the close of his *Dissertations on Futurity* (shocked at the idea of *eternal* punishment in *every* case) proposes the following hypothesis—"That the spirit of God had made choice of an *ambiguous* term αιονιος, acknowledged on both sides, sometimes to mean eternal, and sometimes only a temporary duration, with the wise view, that men might live in fear of *everlasting punishment*; because, it is possible, it may be *everlasting*; and at the same time God be at liberty (if I may so speak) without impeachment of his faithfulness and truth, to inflict either *finite* or infinite punishment, as his divine wisdom, power, and goodness shall direct." He, however, only suggests this scheme with an amiable and becoming modesty.

Between the system of *restoration* and the system of *endless misery*, a middle hypothesis of the *final destruction* of the wicked (after having suffered the punishment due to their crimes) has been adopted more particularly by Dr. John Taylor of Norwich; Rev. Mr. Bourne, of Birmingham; and Mr. John Marsom, in two small volumes, of which there has been a second edition with additions. They say, that the scripture positively asserts this doctrine of *destruction*;

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and the next paragraph but one was sent by a gentleman who espouses the doctrine of destruction.

that the nature of future punishment (which the scripture terms *death*) determines the meaning of the words *everlasting*, *eternal*, *for ever*, &c. as denoting endless duration; because no law ever did or can inflict the punishment of death for a limited period; that the punishment cannot be corrective, because no man was ever put to death, either to convince his judgment or to reform his conduct; that if the wicked receive a punishment *apportioned* to their crimes, their deliverance is neither to be attributed to the mercy of God, nor the mediation of Jesus Christ, but is an act of absolute justice; and finally, that the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ will never be delivered up, since the scripture asserts, that of *his kingdom there shall be no end*. Those who maintain these sentiments respecting the destruction of the wicked, are accused of espousing the doctrine of *annihilation*; but this accusation they repel, alledging, that philosophically speaking, there can be no annihilation, and that *destruction* is the express phrase used in the New Testament. Of this sentiment there have been many advocates distinguished for their erudition and piety.

The SABBATARIANS are a body of Christians who keep the *seventh* day as the *Sabbath*, and are to be found principally, if not wholly, among

the Baptists. The common reasons why Christians observe the *first* day of the week as the Sabbath are, that on this day Christ rose from the dead; that the apostles assembled, preached, and administered the Lord's Supper, and it has been kept by the church for several ages, if not from the time when Christianity was originally promulgated. The Sabbatarians, however, think these reasons unsatisfactory, and assert that the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, was effected by Constantine, upon his conversion to the Christian religion. The three following propositions contain a summary of their principles as to this article of the Sabbath, by which they stand distinguished. 1st, That God hath required the observation of the seventh, or last day of every week, to be observed by mankind universally for the weekly sabbath. 2dly, That this command of God is perpetually binding on man till time shall be no more; and 3dly, That this sacred rest of the seventh day sabbath is not (by divine authority) changed from the seventh and last to the first day of the week, or that the scripture doth no where require the observation of any other day of the week for the weekly sabbath, but the seventh day only. There are two congregations of the Sabbatarians in London, one among the General Baptists meeting in Mill-yard, Good-man's Fields, the other among

the Particular Baptists meeting in Red Cross street, Cripplegate. There are also a few to be found in different parts of the kingdom.

Mr. Morse informs us that there are many Sabbatarians in America. "Some (says he) in Rhode Island observe the Jewish or Saturday sabbath, from a persuasion that it was one of the ten commandments, which they plead are all in their nature moral, and were never abrogated in the New Testament. Though, on the contrary, others of them believe it originated at the time of the creation, in the command given to Adam by the Creator himself." See Genesis, chap. ii. 3. "At New Jersey also there are three congregations of the Seventh Day Baptists; and at Ephrata, in Pennsylvania, there is one congregation of them, called Tunkers. There are likewise a few Baptists who keep the seventh day as holy time, who are the remains of the Keithian or Quaker Baptists."

This tenet has given rise to various controversies, and writers of considerable ability have appeared on both sides of the question. Mr. Cornthwaite, a respectable minister among them, about the year 1740, published several tracts in support of it, which ought to be consulted by those who wish to obtain satisfaction on the subject. The reader should also have recourse to Dr. Chandler's two discourses on the Sabbath, Mr. Amner's

Dissertation on the Weekly Festival of the Christian Church, and Dr. Kennicott's Sermon and Dialogue on the Sabbath, and the Rev. S. Palmer's publication on the *Nature and Obligation of the Christian Sabbath*, which is well worthy of attention. But whatever controversy may have been agitated on this subject, certain it is, that were no *particular day* set apart for the purpose of devotion (for which some in the present day contend) our knowledge of human nature authorises us to say, that virtue and religion would be either greatly debilitated or finally lost from among mankind.

The Sabbatarians hold in common with other Christians, the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, and though much reduced in number, deserve a distinct mention in this miscellany, on account of their integrity and respectability.*

The MORAVIANS are supposed to have arisen under Nicholas Lewis, Count of Zinzendorf, a German nobleman, who died 1760. They were also called *Hernhuters*, from *Hernhuth*, the name of the village where they were first settled. The followers of Count Zinzendorf are called

* Most of the above particulars respecting the Sabbatarians were communicated to the author by some worthy individuals of that persuasion.

Moravians, because the first converts to his system were some *Moravian* families. The society themselves however assert, that they are descended from the old Moravian and Bohemian Brethren, who existed as a distinct sect sixty years prior to the reformation. They also stile themselves *Unitas Fratrum*, or the *United Brethren;* and, in general, profess to adhere to the Augsburgh confession of faith. When the first reformers were assembled at Augsburgh in Germany, the Protestant Princes employed Melancthon, a divine of great learning and moderation, to draw up a confession of their faith, expressed in terms as little offensive to the Roman Catholics as a regard for truth would permit. And this creed, from the place where it was presented, is called the *Confession of Augsburgh.* It is not easy to unravel the leading tenets of the Moravians. Opinions and practices have been attributed to them of an exceptionable nature, which the more sensible of them totally disavow. They direct their worship to Jesus Christ; are much attached to instrumental as well as vocal music in their religious services; and discover a great predilection for forming themselves into classes, according to sex, age, and character. Their founder not only discovered his zeal in travelling in person over Europe, but has taken special care to send missionaries into almost every

part of the known world. They revive their devotion by celebrating agapæ, or love feasts, and the casting of lots is used amongst them to know the will of the Lord. The sole right of contracting marriage lies with the elders. In Mr. La Trobe's edition of Spangenburgh's exposition of Christian doctrine, their principles are detailed to a considerable length. There is a large community of them at a village near Leeds, which excites the curiosity of the traveller; and they have places of worship in various parts of the kingdom. Mr. Rimius published his candid narrative of this people, and Bishop Lavington (who wrote also against the Methodists) replied, in 1755, in his Moravians compared and detected. Mr. Weld, in his *Travels through the United States*, gives a curious account of a *Settlement of Moravians* at Bethlehem, honourable to their virtue and piety.

Dr. Paley, in his *Evidences of Christianity*, pays the following compliment to the religious practices of the *Moravians* and *Methodists;* he is speaking of the first Christians—"After men became *Christians*, much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion in religious meetings—in celebrating the eucharist—in conferences—in exhortations—in preaching—in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other societies. Perhaps their mode of life

in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum*, or of *modern Methodists.*" Be it, however, the desire of *every* body of Christians not only thus to imitate the *primitive disciples* in their *outward conduct*, but to aspire after the peaceableness of *their* tempers, and the purity of *their* lives."

SANDEMANIANS,* a modern sect, that originated in Scotland about the year 1728; where it is, at this time, distinguished by the name of Glassites, after its founder, Mr. John Glas, who was a minister of the established church in that kingdom, but being charged with a design of subverting the national covenant, and sapping the foundation of all national establishments, by maintaining that *the kingdom of Christ is not of this world*, was expelled by the synod from the church of Scotland. His sentiments are fully explained in a tract published at that time, entitled, "The Testimony of the King of Martyrs," and preserved in the first volume of his works. In consequence of Mr. Glas's expulsion, his adherents formed themselves into churches, conformable in their institution and discipline, to

* The author has been favoured with this entire account of the Sandemanians by a gentleman of respectability, who belongs to that body of Christians.

what they apprehended to be the plan of the first churches recorded in the New Testament. Soon after the year 1755, Mr. Robert Sandeman, an elder in one of these churches in Scotland, published a series of letters addressed to Mr. Hervey, occasioned by his Theron and Aspasio, in which he endeavours to shew, that *his* notion of faith is contradictory to the scripture account of it, and could only serve to lead men, professedly holding the doctrines called Calvinistic, to establish their own righteousness upon their frames, feelings, and acts of faith. In these letters Mr. Sandeman attempts to prove that faith is neither more nor less than a simple assent to the divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ, delivered for the offences of men, and raised again for their justification, as recorded in the New Testament. He also maintains that the word faith or belief, is constantly used by the apostles to signify what is denoted by it in common discourse, viz. a persuasion of the truth of any proposition, and that there is no difference between believing any common testimony and believing the apostolic testimony, except that which results from the testimony itself, and the divine authority on which it rests. This led the way to a controversy among those who are called Calvinists, concerning the nature of justifying faith, and those who adopted Mr. Sandeman's notion of

it, and they who are denominated Sandemanians, formed themselves into church order, in strict fellowship with the churches of Scotland, but holding no kind of communion with other churches. Mr. Sandeman died 1772, in America.

The chief opinion and practices in which this sect differs from other Christians, are, their weekly administration of the Lord's Supper; their love feasts, of which every member is not only allowed, but required to partake, and which consist of their dining together at each other's houses in the interval between the morning and afternoon service. Their kiss of charity used on this occasion, at the admission of a new member, and at other times when they deem it necessary and proper; their weekly collection before the Lord's Supper, for the support of the poor and defraying other expences; mutual exhortation; abstinence from blood and things strangled; washing each other's feet, when, as a deed of mercy, it might be an expression of love; the precept concerning which, as well as other precepts, they understand literally. Community of goods, so far as that every one is to consider all that he has in his possession and power liable to the calls of the poor and the church, and the unlawfulness of laying up treasures upon earth, by setting them apart for any distant, future, and uncertain use. They allow of public and private diversions so far as

they are not connected with circumstances really sinful: but apprehending a lot to be sacred, disapprove of lotteries, playing at cards, dice, &c.

They maintain a plurality of elders, pastors, or bishops, in each church, and the necessity of the presence of two elders, in every act of discipline, and at the administration of the Lord's Supper.

In the choice of these elders, want of learning and engagement in trade are no sufficient objection, if qualified according to the instructions given to Timothy and Titus; but second marriages disqualify for the office; and they are ordained by prayer and fasting, imposition of hands, and giving the right hand of fellowship.

In their discipline they are strict and severe, and think themselves obliged to separate from the communion and worship of all such religious societies, as appear to them not to profess the simple truth for their only ground of hope, and who do not walk in obedience to it. We shall only add, that in every transaction they esteem unanimity to be absolutely necessary.

HUTCHINSONIANS, the followers of John Hutchinson, born in Yorkshire, 1674, and who in the early part of life served the Duke of Somerset, in the capacity of a steward. The

Hebrew scriptures, he says, comprize a perfect system of natural philosophy, theology, and religion. In opposition to Dr. Woodward's Natural History of the Earth, Mr. Hutchinson, in 1724, published the first part of his curious book, called, *Moses's Principia.* Its second part was presented to the public in 1727, which contains, as he apprehends, the principles of the scripture philosophy, which are a plenum and the air. So high an opinion did he entertain of the Hebrew language, that he thought the Almighty must have employed it to communicate every species of knowledge, and that accordingly every species of knowledge is to be found in the Old Testament. Of his mode of philosophising the following specimen is brought forward to the reader's attention. "The air (he supposes) exists in three conditions, fire, light, and spirit, the two latter are the finer and grosser parts of the air in motion: from the earth to the sun, the air is finer and finer till it becomes pure light near the confines of the sun, and fire in the orb of the sun, or solar focus. From the earth towards the circumference of this system, in which he includes the fixed stars, the air becomes grosser and grosser till it becomes stagnant, in which condition it is at the utmost verge of this system; from whence (in his opinion) the ex-

pression of *outer darkness, and blackness of darkness*, used in the New Testament, seems to be taken."

The followers of Mr. Hutchinson are numerous, and among others the Rev. Mr. Romaine, Lord Duncan Forbes of Culloden, and the late amiable Dr. Horne, Bishop of Norwich, who published an *Abstract* of Mr. Hutchinson's writings. They have never formed themselves into any distinct church or society.

The Dunkers and Shakers are two sects peculiar to AMERICA.

The DUNKERS (or Tunkers) arose about 1724, and formed themselves into a kind of commonwealth, mostly in Pennsylvania. They baptize by immersion, dress like the Dominican friars, never shave head nor beard, have different apartments for the sexes, live chiefly on roots and vegetables, except at their love-feasts, when they eat only mutton. It is said that no bed is allowed them but in case of sickness, for in their separate cells they have a bench to lie upon, and a block of wood for their pillow. Their principal tenet is the mortification of the body, and they deny the eternity of future punishment. They are commonly called the *harmless* Dunkers.

The SHAKERS, instituted in 1774, are the followers of Anna Leese, whom they stile the elect Lady, and the Mother of all the Elect. They say she is the woman mentioned in the twelfth chapter of the Revelations, can speak seventy-two tongues, and converses with the dead. Their enthusiasm is vented in jumping, dancing, and violent exertions of the body, which bringing on *shaking*, they are termed Shakers. This dancing, they say, denotes their victory over sin. Their most favourite exercise is turning round for an hour or two, which, in their opinion, shews the great power of God. See a curious account of the Shakers in the *first* volume of the Duke de la Rochefoucault's *Travels through America*.

The *American* editor of this work, has added the following article.

"Many of those who lately migrated from WALES to America, have adopted the following articles as their religious constitution: 1. The convention shall be called the *Christian church*.

"2. It shall never be called by another name, or be distinguished by the particular tenets of any man or set of men.

"3. Jesus Christ is the *only* head—believers in him the *only* members—and the New Testament the *only* rule of the fraternity.

"4. In mental matters, each member shall enjoy his own sentiments, and freely discuss every subject; but in discipline, a strict conformity with the precepts of Christ, is required.

"5. Every distinct society belonging to this association, shall have the same power of admitting its members, electing its officers, and in case of mal-conduct, of impeaching them.

"6. Delegates from the different congregations, shall meet from time to time, at an appointed place, to consult the welfare and advancement of the interest.

"7. At every meeting for religious worship, collections shall be made for the poor, and the promulgation of the gospel *among the Heathens.*"

This plan, which has many traits to recommend it, originated chiefly with the *Rev M. J. Rees*, who a few years ago emigrated from Wales, and has distinguished himself in America, by his talents and activity.

As to the other sects in the United States, they are much the same as on this side of the Atlantic. For an account of them, the reader may consult *Morse's American Geography*, and *Winterbotham's History of America.*

The MYSTICS are those who profess a pure and sublime devotion, with a disinterested love of

God, free from all selfish considerations. Passive contemplation is the state of perfection to which they aspire. Of this description there have been many singular characters, especially Madam Guyon, a French lady, who made a great noise in the religious world. Fenelon, the amiable Archbishop of Cambray, favoured the sentiments of this female devotee, for which he was reprimanded by the Pope, and to whose animadversions he *most dutifully* assented contrary to the convictions of his own mind. It is not uncommon for the Mystics to allegorise certain passages of scripture, at the same time not denying the literal sense, as having an allusion to the inward experience of believers. Thus, according to them, the word *Jerusalem*, which is the name of the capital of Judea, signifies allegorically the church militant; morally, a believer; and mysteriously heaven. That fine passage also in Genesis, "Let there be light, and there was light," which is, according to the letter, corporeal light, signifies allegorically, the Messiah; morally, grace, and mysteriously, beatitude, or the light of glory. *Mysticism* is not confined to any particular profession of Christianity, but is to be understood as generally applied to those who dwell upon the *inward operations* of the mind (such as the *Quakers*, &c.) laying little or no stress on the outward ceremonies of religion.

*The SWEDENBORGIANS are the followers of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish nobleman, who died in London, 1772. He professed himself to be the founder (under the Lord) of the *New Jerusalem Church*, alluding to the New Jerusalem spoken of in the Book of the Revelation of St. John. His tenets, although peculiarly distinct from every other system of divinity in Christendom, are nevertheless drawn from the Holy Scriptures, and supported by numberless quotations from them. He asserts, that in the year

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*The two following sects are occasionally mentioned in conversation, and the author has been asked by young people more than once for an explanation of them. A short account therefore is here subjoined.

The *Fifth Monarchy Men* were a set of enthusiasts in the time of Cromwell, who expected the *sudden* appearance of Christ to establish on earth a new *monarchy*, or kingdom. In consequence of this allusion some of them aimed at the subversion of all human government. In ancient history we read of four great monarchies, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman: and these men believing that this new spiritual kingdom of Christ was to be the *fifth*, came to bear the name by which they are distinguished.

The *Muggletonians* were the followers of Ludovick Muggleton, a journeyman taylor, who with his companion Reeves (a person of equal obscurity) set up for great *Prophets*, in the turbulent times of Cromwell. They pretended to absolve or condemn whom they pleased, and gave out that they were the two last witnesses spoken of in the Revelations, who were to appear previous to the final destruction of the world.

1743, the Lord manifested himself to him in a personal appearance; and at the same time opened his spiritual eyes, so that he was enabled constantly to see and converse with spirits and angels.* From that time he began to print and publish various wonderful things, which, he says, were revealed to him, relating to heaven and hell, the state of men after death, the worship of God, the spiritual sense of the scriptures, the various earths in the universe, and their inhabitants, with many other extraordinary particulars, the knowledge of which was, perhaps, never pretended to by any other writer, before or since his time. He denies a Trinity of *persons* in the Godhead, but contends for a divine Trinity in

* Baron Swedenborg, in his treatise concerning *heaven and hell*, and of the wonderful things therein, as heard and seen by him, makes the following declaration. "As often as I conversed with angels face to face, it was in their habitations, which are like to our houses on earth, but far more beautiful and magnificent, having rooms, chambers, and apartments in great variety, as also spacious courts belonging to them, together with gardens, parterres of flowers, fields, &c. where the angels are formed into societies. They dwell in contigious habitations, disposed after the manner of our cities, in streets, walks, and squares. I have had the privilege to walk through them, to examine all round about me, and to enter their houses, and this when I was fully awake, having my inward eyes opened." A similar description is given of *heaven* itself, but the reader is referred to the treatise whence the extract is taken.

the single person of Jesus Christ alone, consisting of a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, just like the human Trinity in every individual man, of soul, body, and proceeding operation: and he asserts, that as the latter Trinity constitutes one man, so the former Trinity constitutes one Jehovah God, who is at once the Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator. On this and other subjects, Dr. Priestley addressed letters to the members of the *New Jerusalem Church*, to which several replies were made, and particularly one by Mr. R. Hindmarsh, a printer.

Baron Swedenborg further maintains, that the sacred scripture contains three distinct senses, called *celestial*, *spiritual*, and *natural*, which are united by correspondencies; and that in each sense it is divine truth, accommodated respectively to the angels of the three heavens, and also to men on earth. This science of *correspondencies* (it is said) has been lost for some thousands of years, viz. ever since the time of Job, but is now revived by Emanuel Swedenborg, who uses it as a key to the spiritual or internal sense of the sacred scripture, every page of which, he says, is written by correspondencies, that is, by such things in the natural world as correspond unto and signify things in the spiritual world. He denies the doctrine of atonement, or vicarious sacrifice, together with the doctrines of predesti-

nation, unconditional election, justification by faith alone, the resurrection of the material body, &c. and in opposition thereto maintains, that man is possessed of free-will in spiritual things; that salvation is not attainable without repentance, that is, abstaining from evils because they are sins against God, and living a life of charity and faith, according to the commandments; that man, immediately on his decease, rises again in a spiritual body, which was inclosed in his material body, and that in this spiritual body he lives as a man to eternity, either in heaven or in hell, according to the quality of his past life.

It is further maintained by Baron Swedenborg and his followers, that all those passages in the sacred scripture, generally supposed to signify the destruction of the world by fire, &c. commonly called the last judgment, must be understood according to the above-mentioned science of correspondencies, which teaches, that by the end of the world, or consummation of the age, is not signified the destruction of the world, but the destruction or end of the present Christian church, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants of every description or denomination; and that this last judgment actually took place in the spiritual world in the year 1757; from which æra is dated the second advent of the Lord, and the commencement of a new Christian

church, which, they say, is meant by the new heaven and new earth in the Revelation, and the New Jerusalem thence descending.

Such are the general outlines of Baron Swedenborg's principal doctrines, collected from his voluminous writings. His followers are numerous in England, Germany, Sweden, &c. and also in America. They use a liturgy, and instrumental, as well as vocal music, in their public worship.* Mr. *Proud*, formerly a General Baptist minister, is at present the most popular preacher amongst them.

We shall close our list of DENOMINATIONS with an account of that discriminating article of belief, which refers to the *final triumphs of Christianity*. Its advocates are not indeed a sect distinct from others, but their tenet prevails in a less or greater degree throughout almost every department of the religious world.

The MILLENARIANS are those who believe that Christ will reign personally on earth for a thousand years, and their name, taken from the Latin, *mille*, a thousand, has a direct allusion to the duration of this spiritual empire. "The

* The whole of the above account was sent to the author for insertion by a gentleman of that denomination.

doctrine of the Millenium, or a future paradisiacal state of the earth, (says a monthly reviewer) is not of Christian but of Jewish origin. The tradition is attributed to Elijah, which fixes the duration of the world in its present imperfect condition to six thousand years, and announces the approach of a sabbath of a thousand years of universal peace and plenty, to be ushered in by the glorious advent of the Messiah. This idea may be traced in the epistle of Barnabas, and in the opinions of Papias, who knew of no written testimony in its behalf. It was adopted by the author of the Revelations, by Justin Martyr, by Irænus, and by a long succession of the fathers. As the theory is animated and consolatory, and, when divested of cabalistic numbers and allegorical decorations, *probable even in the eye of philosophy*, it will no doubt always retain a number of adherents."*

*It is somewhat remarkable, that DRUIDISM, the religion of the first inhabitants of this island, had a particular reference to the progressive melioration of the human species. A notion of a *Millenium* seems to have been familiar to their minds, and therefore forms a striking coincidence with Christianity. The tenets of *Druidism* (which also include the doctrine of universal restoration) are far from being extinct in the principality. See a curious and interesting sketch of the system of *Druidism*, in some very ingenious POEMS, by Edward Williams, *the Welsh Bard*, in two volumes.

But as the MILLENIUM has of late attracted the attention of the public, we shall enter into a short detail of it.

Mr. Joseph Mede, Dr Gill, Bishop Newton, and Mr. Winchester, contend for the *personal reign* of Christ on earth. To use that prelate's own words, in his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*—" When these great events shall come to pass, of which we collect from the prophecies, this to be the proper order; the Ptotestant witnesses shall be greatly exalted, and the 1260 years of their prophecying in sackcloth, and of the tyranny of the beast, shall end together; the conversion and restoration of the Jews succeed; then follows the ruin of the Othman empire; and then the total destruction of Rome and of Antichrist. When these great events, I say, shall come to pass, then shall the kingdom of Christ commence, or the reign of the saints upon earth. So Daniel expressly informs us, that the kingdom of Christ and the saints will be raised upon the ruins of the kingdom of Antichrist, 7, 26, 27. *But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end: and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and*

all dominion shall serve and obey him. So likewise St. John saith, that upon the final destruction of the beast and the false prophet, Rev. xx. *Satan is bound for a thousand years; and I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus Christ and for the word of God; which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image; neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a* THOUSAND *years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.* It is, I conceive, to these great events the fall of Antichrist, the re-establishment of the Jews, and the beginning of the glorious MILLENIUM, that the three different dates in Daniel of 1260 years, 1290 years, and 1335 years, are to be referred. And as Daniel saith, xii. 12. *Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh the* 1335 *years.* So St. John saith, xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.* Blessed and happy indeed will be this period; and it is very observable, that the martyrs and confessors of Jesus, in Papist as well as Pagan times, will be raised to partake of this felicity. Then shall all those gracious promises in the Old Testament be fulfilled—of the am-

plitude and extent—of the peace and prosperity—of the glory and happinesss of the church in the latter days. *Then* in the full sense of the words, Rev. xi. 15. *Shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* According to tradition,* these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints, will be the *seventh Millenary* of the world; for as God created the world in *six* days, and rested on the *seventh*, so the world, it is argued, will continue *six* thousand years, and the *seventh thousand* will be the great *Sabbatism* or holy rest to the people of God. *One day*, 2 Pet. iii. 8. *being with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* According to tradition too, these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints, are the *great day of judgment*, in the morning or beginning whereof, shall be the coming of Christ in flaming fire, and the particular judgment of Antichrist, and the first resurrection; and in the *evening* or *conclusion* whereof, shall be the GENERAL RESURRECTION of the dead, *small and great; and they shall be judged every man according to their works.*"*

* See Burnet's Theory.

* Mr. Winchester, in his *Lectures on the Prophecies*, freely indulges his imagination on this curious subject. He suggests,

This is a just representation of the *Millenium*, according to the common opinion entertained of it, that CHRIST will reign *personally* on earth during the period of *one thousand years!* But Dr. Whitby, in a *Dissertation on the subject*; Dr. Priestley, in his *Institutes of Religion*, and the author of the *Illustrations of Prophecy*, contend against the literal interpretation of the Millenium, both as to its nature and its duration. On such a topic, however, we cannot suggest our opinions with too great a degree of modesty.

Dr. Priestley (entertaining an exalted idea of the advantages to which our nature may be destined) treats the limitation of the duration of the world to *seven* thousand years, as a Rabbinical fable; and intimates that the *thousand* years may be interpreted *prophetically;* then every day would signify a *year*, and the *Millenium* last for *three hundred and sixty-five thousand* years! Again, he supposes, that there will be no resur-

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that the large rivers in America are all on the eastern side, that the Jews may waft themselves the more easily down to the Atlantic, and then across that vast ocean to the Holy Land; that Christ will appear at the equinoxes (either March or September) when the days and nights are equal all over the globe; and finally, that the body of Christ will be luminous, and being suspended in the air, over the equator, for twenty-four hours, will be seen with circumstances of peculiar glory, from pole to pole by *all* the inhabitants of the world!

rection of any individuals till the general resurrection; and that the *Millenium* implies only the *revival of religion.* This opinion is indeed to be found in his *Institutes*, published many years ago, but latterly he has inclined to the *personal reign of Christ.* See his *Farewell Sermon*, preached at Hackney, previous to his emigration to America. The same conjecture as to its duration is thrown out by the author of the *Illustrations of Prophecy;* but he contends that in the period commonly called the *Millenium*, a melioration of the human race will gradually take place, by *natural* means, throughout the world. For his reasons, we refer to the work itself, where will be found an animated sketch of that period, when an end shall be put to many of the crimes and calamities now prevalent in the globe!

The Rev. Mr. Bicheno, of Newbury, likewise, has in his late publications, thrown out some curious particulars respecting the *Millenium;* and though the reader may not agree with him in many things, yet he will applaud his ingenuity.

This final article of the *Millenium*, shall be closed with one observation. However the *Millenarians* may differ among themselves respecting the nature of this great event, it is agreed on all hands, that *such* a *revolution* will be effected in the latter days, by which *vice* and its attendant

misery shall be banished from the earth; thus completely forgetting all those dissentions and animosities by which the religious world has been agitated, and terminating the grand drama of human affairs with UNIVERSAL FELICITY.*

These are the divisions of human opinions, which characterize the more popular departments of the religious world. I have endeavoured to delineate them with accuracy and brevity. Each system boasts of admirers, and professes to have

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* The professors of Christianity have instituted *Societies* for the advancement of religion. There are four which deserve to be mentioned: 1. *The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge*, which erects charity schools in England and Wales, and distributes Bibles, Common Prayer Books, and religious tracts; 2. *The Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, which takes care that the West India islands and the British colonies in North America are provided with episcopal clergymen and schoolmasters; 3. *A Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge*, designed to banish ignorance and profaneness from the Highlands and Western islands; and, 4. *A Society established in Ireland* called *The Incorporated Society in Dublin for promoting English Protestant Working Schools.*

Mr. Daniel Neal, about 60 years ago, estimated the number of Dissenters in England at one hundred and fifty thousand families; but since that period it is believed that they have declined. At present the proportion of *Nonconformists* to the *Members of the Church of England* is supposed to be as *one* to *five*; and it is singular that the *same* proportion holds between the *Episcopalians* and *Roman Catholics* in Ireland.

its peculiar arguments and tendencies. To a thoughtful mind they exhibit a melancholy picture of the human understanding, misguided through passion, and warped with prejudice. In drawing out the motley catalogue, several cursory reflections arose in my mind. A few only, such as may operate as a persuasive to religious moderation, and tend also to the improvement of other Christian graces, shall be submitted to the reader's attention.

REFLECTIONS.

I pray God to give all his *ministers* and *people* more and more of the *Spirit of Wisdom* and of *love*, and of *a sound mind*, and to remove far from us those mutual *jealousies* and *animosities* which hinder our acting with that *unanimity* which is necessary to the successful carrying on of *our common warfare* against the *enemies of* CHRISTIANITY.

Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion.

1. SINCE the best and wisest of mankind thus differ on the speculative tenets of religion, let us modestly estimate the extent of the human faculties.

A modest estimate of the human faculties is an irresistible inducement to moderation. After laborious investigations, probably with equal degrees of knowledge and of integrity, men arrive at opposite conclusions. This is a necessary consequence of present imperfection. Human reason, weak and fallible, soars with feeble, and often with ineffectual wing, into the regions of speculation. Let none affirm that this mode of argument begets an indifference to the acquisition and propagation of religious truth. To declare that all tenets are alike, is an affront to the human

understanding. The chilling hesitation of scepticism, the forbidding sternness of bigotry, and the delirious fever of enthusiasm, are equally abhorrent from the genius of true Christianity. Truth being the conformity of our conceptions to the nature of things, we should be fearful lest our conceptions be tinctured with error. Philosophers suppose that the senses convey the most determinate species of information; yet these senses, notwithstanding their singular acuteness, are not endued with an instinctive infallibility. How much greater cause have we to mistrust the exercise of our rational powers, which often from early infancy are beset with prejudices!

Our reason, however, proves of essential use to us, in ascertaining the *nature* of truths and the *degrees* of evidence with which they are severally attended. This would necessarily induce a modesty of temper, which may be fitly pronounced the groundwork of charity. *Richard Baxter*, revered for his good sense as well as fervent piety, has these remarkable expressions on the subject—"I am not so foolish as to pretend my certainty to be greater than it is, merely because it is a dishonour to be less certain; nor will I by shame be kept from confessing those infirmities which those have as much as I, who hypocritically reproach me with them. My certainty that I am a man, is before my certainty

that there is a God; my certainty that there is a God, is greater than my certainty that he requireth love and holiness of his creature; my certainty of *this*, is greater than my certainty of the life of reward and punishment hereafter; my certainty of that, is greater than my certainty of the endless duration of it, and of the immortality of individual souls; my certainty of the Deity, is greater than my certainty of the Christian faith; my certainty of the Christian faith in its essentials, is greater than my certainty of the perfection and infallibility of all the holy scriptures; my certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the meaning of many particular texts, and so of the truth of many particular doctrines, or of the canonicalness of some certain books. So that as you see by what gradations my understanding doth proceed, so also that *my certainty differeth as the evidence differ.* And they that have attained to greater perfection and a higher degree of certainty than I, should pity me, and produce their *evidence* to help me." It were to be wished that this *accurate* statement of the nature and degrees of belief were *duly impressed* on the mind of *every* Christian; to the want of it must be ascribed the prevalence of an ignorant and besotted bigotry.

Reason, though imperfect, is the noblest gift of God, and upon no pretence whatever must it

be decried. It distinguishes man from the beasts of the field—constitutes his resemblance to the Deity, and elevates him to the superiority he possesses over this lower creation. By Deists it is extolled, to the prejudice of revelation; and by Enthusiasts depreciated, that they might the more effectually impose on their votaries the absurdities of their system. Yet, strange inconsistency! even these enthusiasts condescend to employ this calumniated faculty, in pointing out the conformity of their tenets to scripture, and in fabricating evidence for their support. But beware of speaking lightly of reason, which is emphatically denominated *the eye of the soul!* Every opprobrious epithet with which the thoughtless or the designing dare to stigmatize it, vilifies the Creator. Circumscribed, indeed, are its operations, and fallible are its decisions. That it is incompetent to investigate certain subjects which our boundless curiosity may essay to penetrate, is universally acknowledged. Its extension, therefore, beyond its assigned boundaries, has proved an ample source of error. Mr. *Colliber*, in many respects an ingenious writer, imagines in his treatise, entitled, *The Knowledge of God*, that the Deity must have *some form*, and intimates it may probably be *spherical!!* Indeed it has generated an endless list of paradoxes, and given birth to those monstrous systems of

metaphysical theology, which are the plague of wise men, and the idol of fools. Upon many religious topics, which have tried and tortured our understandings, the sacred writers are respectfully silent. Where they cease to inform us we should drop our enquiries; except we claim superior degrees of information, and proudly deem ourselves more competent to decide on these intricate subjects.

The primitive Christians, in some of their councils, elevated the New Testament on a throne —thus intimating their concern, that by that volume *alone* their disputes should be finally determined.

2. The diversity of religious opinions implies no reflection upon the sufficiency of scripture to instruct us in matters of faith and practice, and should not, therefore, be made a pretence for uncharitableness.

Controversies are frequently agitated concerning words rather than things. This is to be ascribed chiefly to the ambiguity of language, which has been a fertile source of ecclesiastical animosities. But there is not in the world, such a multitude of opinions as superficial observers may imagine. A common gazer at the starry firmament conceives the stars to be innumerable; but the astronomer knows their number to be limited—nay, to be much smaller than a vulgar

eye would apprehend. On the subjects of religion, many men dream rather than think—imagine rather than believe. Were the intellect of every individual awake, and preserved in vigorous exercise, similarity of sentiment would be much more prevalent. But mankind will not think, and hence *thinking* has been deemed "one of the least exerted privileges of cultivated humanity." It unfortunately happens that the idle flights indulged by enthusiasts*—the burdensome rites revered by the superstitious—and the corrupt maxims adopted by worldly-minded professors, are charged on the scriptures of truth. Whereas the inspired volume is fraught with rational doctrines—equitable precepts—and immaculate rules of conduct. Fanciful accommoda-

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* Since the article relative to the *Weslean* METHODITS has been thrown off, a communication has been made to the author respecting their *revival meetings*, where certain persons, under the influence of a religious phrenzy, occasion by their groanings and vociferations an uncommon degree of tumult and confusion. The more sensible, however, of the Methodists, reprobate these disgraceful scenes. At Nottingham the writer of this paragraph witnessed them with astonishment. He hopes that such fanaticism will not continue long, and that some persons of respectability among them will interfere, so as to put an end to practices, which cannot but strengthen the hands of infidelity, and afford matter of grief to all the friends of real and substantial piety.

tions—distorted passages—false translations—and forced analogies, have been the despicable means employed to debase and corrupt the Christian doctrine. A calm and impartial investigation of the word of God, raises in our minds conceptions worthy the perfections of Deity—suitable to the circumstances of mankind, and adapted to purify and exalt our nature:

> Religion's lustre—is by nature innocent,
> Divinely pure, and simple from all arts;
> You daub and dress her like a common mistress—
> The harlot of your fancies! and by adding
> False beauties, which she wants not, make the world
> Suspect her angel face is foul beneath,
> And will not bear all lights!

The papists deprive their laity of the use of scripture, by restraining its use, and denying its sufficiency. The same reason also was assigned to vindicate the necessity of an infallible head to dictate in religious matters. Notwithstanding these artful devices to produce unanimity of sentiment, they were not more in possession of it than the Protestants. The discordant sects, which at different periods sprang up in the bosom, and disturbed the tranquillity of the Catholic church, are demonstrative proofs that they failed to attain the desired object. Pretences, therefore, however goodly, should be rejected if they tend to invalidate the sufficiency, or disparage the excellence of holy writ. Least of all should diversity

of sentiment be alledged, for it does not originate in the scriptures themselves, but in the imbecility of the understanding—in the freedom of the will —in the pride of passion—and in the inveteracy of prejudice. Deists, nevertheless, who are expert in observing what may be construed into an objection against revealed religion, declaim loudly on this plausible topic. On account of the diversity of sentiment which obtains, they charge the Bible with being defective in a species of intelligence it never pretended to communicate. Unincumbered with human additions, and uncontaminated with foreign mixtures, it furnishes the believer with that information which illuminates the understanding—meliorates the temper —invigorates the moral feelings, and improves the heart. *All scripture given by inspiration, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished under all good works.*

3. Let not any one presume to exempt himself from an attention to religion, because some of its tenets seem involved in difficulties.

Upon articles which promote the felicity, and secure the salvation of mankind, the scripture is clear and decisive. The curiosity of the inquisitive, and the restlessness of the ingenious, have involved some subjects of theological disquisition

in considerable obscurity. Dr. Paley, speaking of the disputes which distract the religious world, happily remarks, "that the rent has not reached the foundation." Incontrovertible are the facts upon which the fabric of natural and revealed religion is reared; and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!* He who seriously and dispassionately searches the scriptures, must confess that they teach, in explicit terms, that God rules over all—that man is fallen from his primeval rectitude—that the Messiah shed his blood for his restoration—and that in a future state rewards await the righteous, and punishments will be inflicted on the wicked.

From the preceding sketch of the different opinions of Christians, it appears that controversies have been chiefly agitated concerning the person of *Christ*—the subject of the *divine favour*—and the article of *church government*. But what was the specific matter of disputation? Not whether *Christ* has actually appeared on earth to introduce a new dispensation; nor whether God is disposed to shew *grace* or favour towards fallen man; nor whether the professors of religion ought to submit themselves to certain regulations, or *church government*, for mutual benefit. These are truths revered by every denomination, and the only point of contention has been, what *particular views* are to be entertained

of these interesting facts. The Trinitarian, the Arian, and the Socinian, equally acknowledge the *divinity* of Christ's mission, or that he was the Messiah predicted by the ancient prophets; and the chief point of dispute is, whether this Messiah be a man highly inspired—or one of the angelic order—or a being possessed of the attributes of Deity. The Calvinist, the Arminian, and the Baxterian also, each of them firmly believes that *the grace of God hath appeared*, and differ only respecting the wideness of its extent, and the mode of its communication. Similar observations might be transferred to the subject of church government, and the administration of ceremonies. But sufficient has been said to shew that the differences subsisting between Christians do not affect the truth of Christianity, nor hazard the salvation of mankind.

Faint indeed is the light thrown by revelation on certain subjects. Yet no lover of righteousness need distress himself, whether he be mistaken in leading a life of virtue and of piety. Practical religion lies within a narrow compass. The sayings of Christ embrace almost every part of human conduct, though his disciples have been lamentably deficient in paying them the attention due to their importance. Jesus Christ assures us, that *to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, is the first and great commandment*—

and that *the second is like unto it—to love our neighbour as ourselves. They* entertain mistaken views of the *glorious gospel*, who consider it inimical to the prosperity of the human race. Descending from a God of love, and presented to us by his only begotten Son—every mind should have opened for its reception. Wrangling should have been prevented by the clearness of its fundamental doctrines, hesitation about obedience precluded by the justice of its precepts, and the beauty of its examples should have captivated the most indifferent hearts.

The perplexity in which some religious tenets are involved, instead of alienating us from the practice of righteousness, should quicken our enquiries after truth. Indeed, upon a serious and intelligent individual, it produces this beneficial effect. Having in his eye the scripture as the only standard, he is the more alive to free enquiry, when he contemplates the diversity of religious systems; and more accurately scrutinizes their nature, examines their foundation, and ascertains their tendencies. This mode of arriving at truth, is attended with sterling advantages. Our knowledge is enlarged—our candor established—and our belief founded on the firm basis of conviction. Such a believer reflects an honour upon the denomination with which he connects himself. For feeling sensibly the difficulties of religious

investigation, he presumes not to charge with *heresy* those of his fellow Christians who differ from him; nor is he such a stranger to the perfections of the Deity, and to the benign spirit of his religion, as to consign them over to the regions of future misery. Of Mr. Gouge, an eminent Nonconformist minister, it is thus honourably recorded by the great and good Archbishop Tillotson—"He allowed others to differ from him even in opinions that were very dear to him, and provided men did but *fear God, and work righteousness*, he loved them heartily, how distant soever from him in judgment about things less necessary: in all which he is very worthy to be a pattern to men of all persuasions."

4. Let us reflect with pleasure in how many important articles of belief all Christians are agreed.

Respecting the origin of evil, the nature of the human soul, the existence of an intermediate state, and the duration of future punishment, together with points of a similar kind, opinions have been, and in this imperfect state will ever continue to be different. But on articles of faith, far more interesting in themselves, and far more conducive to our welfare, are not all Christians united? We *all* believe in the perfections and government of one God—in the degradation of human nature through transgression—in the vast utility of the

life, death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ—in the assurance of the divine aid—in the necessity of exercising repentance, and of cultivating holiness—in a resurrection from the dead—and in a future state of rewards and punishment. Cheerfully would I enter into a minute illustration of this important part of the subject; but the devout and intelligent Dr. Price has ably discussed it in the first sermon on the Christian Doctrine, to which discourse I refer the reader, and recommend it to his repeated and impartial perusal. Many Christians are more anxious to know wherein their brethren *differ* from them, than wherein they are agreed. This betrays an unhappy propensity to division, and bears an unfavourable aspect on mutual forbearance, one of the highest embellishments of the Christian character. An enlightened zeal is perfectly compatible with religious moderation, which is more particularly opposed to the furious spirit of uncharitableness, the gangrene of genuine Christianity. From the shy and distant deportment of men of different persuasions towards each other, a stranger to them all, would with difficulty be brought to believe that they looked up to the *same* God—confided in the *same* Saviour—and were bending their steps towards the *same* state of future happiness. To me, often has the Christian world had the appearance of a subdued

country, portioned out into innumerable districts, through the pride and ambition of its conquerors, and each district occupied in retarding each other's prosperity. Alas! what would the *Prince of Peace* say, were he to descend and sojourn among us? Would he not reprove our unhallowed warmth—upbraid us with our divisions—chide our unsocial tempers—and exhort to amity and concord? "This antipathy to your fellow Christians," would he say, "is not the *effect* of my religion, but proceeds from the *want* of it. My doctrines, precepts, and example, have an opposite tendency. Had you *learned of me* you would have never uttered against your brethren terms of reproach, nor lifted up the arm of persecution. The new commandment I gave unto you was—*That ye love one another.*"

The ingenious Mr. Seed (a clergyman) observes, "Our own particular darling tenets, by which we are distinguished from the bulk of Christians, we look upon as our private inclosures, our private walks, in which we have property exclusive of others, and which we take care to cultivate, beautify, and fence in against all invaders. To the received notions, however *important*, we are more indifferent, as the common field and public walks, which lie open to every body." Were the professors of the Gospel once fully sensible how they coincide on the funda-

mental facts of natural and revealed religion, they would cherish with each other a more friendly intercourse, unite more cordially to propagate religion both at home and abroad, and superior degrees of success would crown their combined exertions for the purpose. Much is it regretted that disputes have generally been agitated concerning unessential points, and with an acrimony diametrically opposite to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That controversy is in itself injurious to truth, no intelligent individual will insinuate. When conducted with ability and candor, light has been struck out, errors have been rectified, and information, on interesting subjects, has been communicated to the public. But alas! controversy has been perverted to evil purposes. To many who have engaged in theological discussion, victory, not truth, appears to have been the object of pursuit. Seduced by unworthy motives, they swerved from the line of conduct prescribed by an apostle, and contended *boisterously* rather than *earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.* Fiery controversialists, hurried away by impetuousness of temper, or exasperated by the opposition of an acute and pertinacious adversary, have disgraced the polemic page by opprobrious terms and ungenerous insinuations. Thus are infidels furnished with an additional objection to revealed religion—the investigation of interesting

truth terminates in mutual reproaches; and Christians of different sentiments, driven still farther from each other, are the less fitted to associate together in the common mansions of the blest. To this pernicious mode of agitating disputes, there are, however, exceptions, and instances of this kind might be adduced. In the defence of Christianity, and in the support of its particular doctrines, writers have stood forth whose temper and liberality breathe the genuine spirit of the Christian Religion. Doddridge's Letters to the Author of Christianity not founded in Argument, Bishop Watson's Reply to Gibbon, and Campbell's Answer to Hume on Miracles, are admirable examples of the candor with which religious controversies should be invariably conducted. In an age enlightened like the present, this conciliating spirit was to be expected; and we indulge the pleasing hope, that times still more auspicious to truth are approaching, when the amicable discussion of *every* doctrine supposed to be contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall obtain an universal prevalence:

> Seize upon *truth* where'er 'tis found,
> Among your friends—among your foes,
> On *Christian* or on *Heathen* ground,
> The flower's *divine* where'er it grows;
> Neglect the prickles and assume the rose!
>
> WATTS.

TRUTH, indeed, moral and divine, flourishes only in the soil of freedom. There it shoots up and sheds its fruit for the healing of the nations. Civil and religious liberty are two of the greatest earthly blessings which heaven can bestow on man. Thrice happy are the people who experience the benefits of good government, unburdened by the impositions of oppression, and who enjoy the sweets of liberty, unembittered by the curse of anarchy and of licentiousness!

5. We should allow to others the same right of private judgment in religious matters, which we claim and exercise ourselves.

It is replied—"We forbid not the sober use of this privilege." But who can estimate the *sobriety* of another man's speculations? and by reprobating the opinions which a serious brother may happen to entertain in consequence of free investigation, we tacitly condemn that operation of his mind which induced him to take up such tenets. This is the spirit of Popery in disguise. Cautiously exercising his reason, and devoutly examining the sacred records, *let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.* This was the judicious advice of Paul to the primitive Christians, and no substantial reason has been, or ever will be given for its being abandoned. For a Protestant, who demands and exercises the right of private judgment, to deny it his brother, is an

unpardonable inconsistency. It is also an act of injustice, and, therefore, contrary to reason, condemned by revelation, and prejudicial to the best interests of mankind. He who insults your person, steals your property, or injures your reputation, subjects himself to the punishment which the law denounces against such offences. What then can we think of the man who attempts to rob you of the right of private judgment?—a jewel of inestimable price—a blessing of the first magnitude! Were we once to relinquish *thinking for ourselves*, and indolently to acquiesce in the representations of others, our understandings might soon groan beneath the absurdities of other men's creeds, and our attention be distracted by the perplexed nature of our religious services. Hitherto, persons have never been wanting unreasonable enough to impose on their brethren articles of faith. The late Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, an avowed foe to ecclesiastical tyranny, has traced its sources with his usual acuteness, and pronounces them to be power—law—patronage—office—the abuse of learning, and mistaken piety. These pretences for domination over conscience are plausible, and by their speciousness millions have been deceived. But explain to a man of common sense the nature and foundation of religious liberty, and the infatuation ceases. He must perceive that the Father of spirits hath

authorized no man to dictate to another what he is to believe—much less to impose his dogmas under pain of eternal punishment;

> Let Cæsar's dues be ever paid,
> To Cæsar and his throne;
> But *consciences* and *souls* were made,
> To be the Lord's alone.
>
> WATTS.

Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? was the energetic language in which Christ reproached the Pharisees; and *prove all things* was Paul's manly exhortation to the church at Thessalonica. These passages alone prove, beyond the possibility of dispute, that both Christ and Paul were distinguished patrons of free enquiry. Free enquiry, even in its fullest extent, has been found serviceable to the interests of religion. Hereby error ceases to be perpetuated, and truth emerges from those shades of darkness with which she has been industriously enveloped by the artful and the designing. Survey the page of ecclesiastical history—mark the intervals of languor when the right of private judgment lay dormant—then was the church of Christ debilitated and pestered with an heterogeneous mass of errors. Excellently is it remarked in a periodical publication—"No man can write down truth. Inquiry is to truth what friction is

to the diamond. It proves its hardness—adds to its lustre—and excites new admiration." The ablest advocates for Christianity confess, that by the attacks of its enemies provoking examination, it has been benefited rather than injured. To infidel writers we are indebted for Butler's profound Analogy—Law's Theory of Natural and Revealed Religion—Campbell's Dissertations on Miracles—Newton's work on the Prophecies—Watson's Apology for the Bible—and other performances, which reflect as much honour on the names of their respective authors, as they have rendered service to the glorious cause they espoused.

6. Let us be careful to treat those who differ from us with kindness.

Believing those who differ from us to be the disciples of error, they have a powerful claim on our compassion. And as a further incentive to a lenient conduct, it should be remembered—that *we differ from them just as much as they do from us.* By either party, therefore, no anathemas should be hurled, and a proneness to persecution should be instantly eradicated. The Quakers, in their address to James the second, on his accession, told him, that they understood he was no more of the established religion than themselves: "We therefore hope (say they) that thou wilt allow us that liberty which thou takest thyself."

The terms *schism* and *heresy* are in the mouth of many, and it is no unfrequent case to find that those who use them most, least understand their real import. Dr. Campbell (who lately favoured the public with an excellent translation of the Four Gospels) thus concludes a learned dissertation on the subject: "No person (says he) who in the spirit of candour and charity adheres to that, which, to the best of his judgment is right, though in this opinion he should be mistaken, is in the scriptural sense either *schismatic* or *heretic;* and he, on the contrary, whatever sect he belongs to, is more entitled to those odious appellations who is most apt to throw the imputation upon others." Would to God, that this observation, made by a great and good man, were engraven on the memory of every individual in Christendom!*

Upon the advantages arising from Christian

* Having had the honour of attending the lectures both of Dr. *Campbell* and Dr. *Gerard*, at Aberdeen, in the year 1790, the author takes this opportunity of expressing his obligation for the instruction received on many important topics; and particularly for that *amiable spirit of candour*, which induced them fairly to state opposite opinions, and never to discover the least trait of that uncharitableness, which is the disgrace of Christianity. The Spanish proverb says, "To *parents*—to *teachers*—and to GOD, *all sufficient*, we cannot exercise too great a degree of gratitude."

moderation we might largely expatiate, and to detail the evils which have flown from an unenlightened and furious zeal, would be to stain my page with blood. The incomparable Bishop Hall, in the last century, wrote a treatise on moderation, and has discussed the subject with that eloquence and ability which are peculiar to all his writings. But this great and good man, towards the close of the same treatise, forgetting the principles which he had been forcibly inculcating, devotes one solitary page to the execrable cause of intolerance. This page he concludes with these remarkable expressions—"*Master Calvin did well approve himself* to God's church, in bringing Servetus to the stake at Geneva." Blessed Jesus! how art thou wounded in the house of thy friends! After this deplorable instance of human inconsistency, should not the most eminent of thy followers beware, lest, by indulging even in the slightest degree a spirit of intolerance, they be insensibly led either to adopt or applaud practices which, under the specious mask of an holy zeal, outrage the very first principles of humanity? To love our *own party* only, is (to use the words of the excellent Doddridge) nothing else than *self-love* reflected. The most zealous partizans, therefore, are revelling in *self-gratification.*

Christians, indeed, of almost *every* denomina-

tion, appear at times to have forgotten, that harshness widens rather than closes the breaches which previous diversity of sentiment may have occasioned. Coercive measures reach not the mind, and the issuing edicts to extort assent to speculative tenets, is the bombast of civil authority. Truth rests on evidence. But what has *evidence* to do with exertions of power, implements of torture, and scenes of devastation? From the commencement of the fourth century, down to the illustrious æra of the reformation, wide and unmolested was the empire of ignorance and of superstition over the human mind. At Rome, for a series of ages, the chair of infallibility was filled by a succession of intolerant and domineering Pontiffs. Complicated systems of cruelty were industriously devised and inhumanly practised, for the support and defence of their most holy faith. Out of that once respectable capital of the world, the demon of persecution rushed forth, brandished his torch, and deluged the church of Christ with the blood of her martyrs. Impatient for the destruction of the human race, he flew into different regions of the earth, framed racks, fixed stakes, erected gibbets, and, like a pestilence, scattered around him consternation and death! Shall the mild and evangelical genius of Protestantism countenance a temper which incites to such execrable deeds, and exultingly

enrolls the names of the perpetrators in the calendar of the saints? In this twilight state of being, to expostulate is our province, to inveigh and persecute is forbidden. *The glorious Gospel of the blessed God* prohibits rash accusations, cruel surmises, and malignant anathemas. Had an inviolable regard been paid to the golden rule, *Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you*, intolerance would have never reared its ensanguined crest to affright the children of men. *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*—was our Saviour's pertinent reprimand to the disciples, who, in the plenitude of their zeal, would have called down fire from heaven to consume the deluded Samaritans. Too often does a portion of this accursed spirit reign in the breasts of Protestants. Hence censures are poured forth, hatreds are engendered, and a preparation for heaven is retarded. Instead, therefore, of presumptuously usurping the seat of judgment, which the Almighty has exclusively reserved to himself, and of impiously aiming to become the dispensers of the divine vengeance, let us wait the issue of all things, in deep and reverential silence. A wise and a good God will solemnly decide the business, when he *judges the world in righteousness!*

7. Let us not repine because perfect unanimity of religious sentiment is unattainable in this present state.

A repining spirit is the source of ill temper towards those who dissent from us; but it seems to be the intention of the Divine Being, that we should think differently concerning certain points of faith and practice. Variety marks the works of God. It is impressed throughout the circumference of the natural, the animal, and the intellectual world. Above us, we behold the dazzling brightness of the sun, the pale splendour of the moon, the mild twinkling of the stars, and the variegated colours which adorn the firmament of heaven! Around us, the surface of the earth is diversified into a thousand beautiful forms, and in the animal, the vegetable, and the fossil kingdoms, no two individual productions are perfectly alike! Within us, upon the slightest examination, we discern our minds stamped with an original peculiarity. From senseless idiotism, up to the piercing sagacity of Newton, how numerous are the gradations of intellect! Minds are of various sizes. Their capacities, habits and views are never in strict conformity with each other. In some degree, therefore, diversity of opinion flows from the very structure of our understanding. To fall out with this branch of the dispensations of God is to arraign his wisdom. Doubtless he might have shed upon us such a superior degree of light that we should have seen as with one eye, and have been altogether of one mind.

But the Supreme Being has otherwise ordered it; and with becoming resignation let us acquiesce in the propriety of the appointment. "If it *must* be with us (says good Bishop Hall) as with two famous rivers in the East, that they run threescore miles together in one channel, with their waters divided in very colour from each other, yet let it be (as it is with them) without noise, without violence."

Innumerable and unavailable have been the attempts made in the successive ages of the church to produce *unanimity of sentiment*. For this purpose legislatures have decreed various acts, poured forth torrents of human blood, and perpetrated deeds at which humanity sickens, shudders, and turns away with disgust. Francis the First, King of France, used to declare, "that if he thought the blood in his arm was tainted with the *Lutheran heresy*, he would have it cut off, and that he would not spare even his own children, if they entertained sentiments contrary to the Catholic Church." Pride in one person, passion in a second, prejudice in a third, and in a fourth investigation, generates difference of opinion. Should diversity be deemed an evil, it is incumbent on rational beings, and congenial with the dignity of the Christian profession, to improve it to valuable purposes. It is an indisputable fact, that different denominations have, in

every age of the church, kept a jealous eye over each other; and hereby the scripture, the common standard to which they appealed for the truth of their respective tenets, have been preserved in greater purity. It may also be added, that diversity of opinion quickens the enquiries after truth, and gives scope for the exercise of charity, which in one passage of the sacred writings is pronounced *superior to faith and hope*, and in another passage termed *the bond of perfectness*. Much improvement have good men extracted from the common evils of life, by these evils giving rise to graces and virtues which otherwise, perhaps, would have had no existence; or, at least, would have been faintly called forth into action. To perceive the justice of this observation, it is not necessary that we be profound contemplators of human affairs.

Under the accumulated difficulties of faith and practice, by which we are embarrassed in this sublunary state of imperfection, we should meditate on the doctrine of a providence, which administers the richest consolation. The dominion exercised by the Supreme Being over the works of his hands, is neither partial as to its objects, narrow in its extent, or transitory in its duration. Unlike earthly monarchs, who expire in their turn, and who are successively borne into the tombs of their ancestors, *the King of Saints*

liveth and reigneth for ever and ever! Evils, indeed, have entered the world, and still continue to distress it. But these evils have not crept into the system unknown to its great Author; and the attributes of Deity ensure their extirpation. Our rejoicing is—*the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!* Glorious, therefore, *must* be the termination of the divine dispensations. The august period is predicted in sacred writ, and lies concealed in the womb of time. Distant may be its arrival, but its blessings, once realized, will compensate the exercise of your faith, and the trial of your patience:

> "One part, one little part, we dimly scan,
> Thro' the dark medium of life's fev'rish dream;
> Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
> If but that little part incongruous seem;
> Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem:
> Oft from apparent ills our blessings rise—
> O! then renounce that impious self-esteem,
> That aims to trace the secrets of the skies;
> For thou art but of dust—*be humble and be wise.*"
>
> BEATTIE.

The Dissertations of Dr. Price (especially that on Providence) are deserving of attention. An elegant little work, also, entitled, *Intimations and Evidences of a future State*, by T. Watson, cannot fail of imparting consolation to the serious mind.

Finally—penetrated with a sense of the imperfection of this present life, let us be exceedingly cautious how we form our religious sentiments, watch unremittingly over our tempers and conduct, and aspire to that better world, where *pure and unadulterated truth* shall be disclosed to our view!

Of all the subjects presented to the human mind, religion claims the first and the greatest attention. If there be a *God*, a *Providence*, a *Saviour*, and a *Future State of retribution*, these weighty truths ought to be pressing upon our minds, and presiding over our conduct. To familiarize ourselves with their evidences, to lay open our souls to their energy, and promote, by every *honourable* method, their spread and establishment among mankind, should be our noblest ambition. Zeal is an elevated and an useful passion. It is forcibly and repeatedly enjoined in the sacred writings. It forms the leading trait of excellence in the best and most enlightened characters. Indeed, an individual can scarcely be pronounced truly good, except he possesses a portion of this celestial fire. But let us be exceedingly careful that our warmth be temperate and regular. Zeal, confined within the limits prescribed by reason and scripture, is attended with the most blessed consequences. Loosened from these restraints, like the devouring confla-

gration, it involves in one undistinguishable ruin the victims of its fury, and triumphs in the desolation it has effected. How different is the Christian, influenced by a zeal purely *evangelical*, from the monster, who is either swoln with the venom of uncharitableness, or pregnant with persecution for conscience sake! "Mistake me not (says good Richard Baxter) I do not slight *orthodoxy*, nor jeer at the name; but only disclose the pretences of *devilish zeal* in pious or seemingly pious men. The slanders of some of these, and the bitter, opprobrious speeches of others, have more effectually done the Devil's service, under the name of *orthodoxy* and zeal for truth, than the malignant scorners of godliness." The pious Matthew Henry declares, that *of all the Christian graces*, ZEAL *is most apt to turn sour*. And Dr. Doddridge in his *Family Expositor*, has this remark—"Wisely did Christ silence the suspicious praises of an *unclean spirit*; and vain is all the hope, which men build merely on those *orthodox professions* of the most important truths, in which *Satan* himself could vie with them." May these observations be remembered by zealots of every description!

Indeed, the light and darkness now blended together, instead of generating a spirit of scepti-

cism, or precipitating us into acts of violence, should impel us to look for *the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. What ye know not now, ye shall know hereafter*—was our Saviour's kind declaration to his disciples, respecting an event which occurred whilst he continued to sojourn amongst them. It is, therefore, reasonable to believe that we shall not remain ignorant of matters of superior importance, when the proper period of communicating higher degrees of information arrives. We may, however, be assured, that the Spirit of God guides all good men into *necessary* truth. This is a sentiment in which the wisest of mankind concur; and upon which learned divines, after their most penetrative researches, are obliged ultimately to rest. A venerable and distinguished Christian father pronounced the greatest *heresy* to be a *wicked life*. Devoutly is it wished that those who are clamorous about speculative tenets, would level their artillery more against the violation of the preceptive part of our religion.

The eloquent Saurin pointedly exclaims—— "Why are not ecclesiastical bodies as rigid and severe against *heresies of practice* as they are against heresies of speculation? Certainly there are heresies in morality as well as in theology.

Councils and synods reduce the doctrines of faith to certain propositional points, and thunder anathemas against all who refuse to subscribe them. They say, cursed be he who doth not believe the divinity of Christ; cursed be he who doth not believe hypostatical union, and the mystery of the cross; cursed be he who denies the inward operations of grace, and the irresistible efficacy of the Spirit. I wish they would make a few canons against *moral heresies.* How many are there of this kind among our people!" These observations made by the intelligent Saurin, respecting the refugee Protestants in Holland, are pregnant with instruction, and are applicable to the Protestants in our times. Their anathemas are directed more against error than against unrighteousness. Whereas, vice is the more formidable enemy to the welfare of mankind. To the word of God, therefore, let us have constant recourse, and thence derive *the doctrine which is according to godliness*, pure as the light of heaven, and refreshing as the dew of the morning! The Gospel of Jesus Christ, justly understood and cordially believed, enlightens the mind —calms the troubled conscience—rectifies depraved propensities—and introduces us into the habitation of *the spirits of just men made perfect.*

But, alas! mankind, instead of ascertaining

what is *truth*, and *how* it can best exert its influence over the several departments of conduct, are occupied in schemes of *interested ambition*, or sunk into *criminal indifference*. Of too many of the human race we may say with Hawkesworth, "they lie down to sleep—they rise up to trifle"—or with Addison, "they make provision for this life as though it were never to have an end, and for the other life as though it were never to have a beginning." Time, the most precious deposit with which God hath entrusted them, is squandered away in scenes of vanity and of dissipation. Johnson also declares, that "notwithstanding the warnings of philosophers, and the daily losses and misfortunes which life forces on their observation, such is the absorption of their thoughts, in the business of the present day—such the resignation of their reason, to empty hopes of future felicity—or such their unwillingness to foresee what they dread, that every calamity comes *suddenly* upon them, and not only presses them as a burden, but crushes as a blow." Upon death they seldom bestow a serious thought. Though awful in its nature, frequent in its recurrence, and alarming in its consequences, it leaves on their minds no permanent impression. Without emotion they behold their fellow-creatures snatched from off the busy theatre of action, and driven, one after

another, either by disease or accident, into *the house appointed for all living!* Upon the decease, indeed, of relatives and friends, they heave a sigh, utter an exclamation, shed a tear, but clothing themselves in the mournful garments of sorrow, the tragedy is quickly over. Reassuming their former views, and laying their minds open afresh to the domination of their passions, they return with an insatiable avidity to the ordinary occupations and amusements of life. Thus proceeds the general tenor of their existence on earth, till *they* also are swept away into the silent receptacles of the dead. But why are men thus forgetful of their original destination? Why lose sight of the end for which their benevolent Creator *breathed into their nostrils the breath of life?* Why not be making diligent preparation for the hour of dissolution, which closes the scene of their activity, and terminates their state of trial?

Pilgrims and sojourners on earth, we are hastening to an eternal world, and a few more fleeting years will place even the youngest of us before the tribunal of Heaven. Whether we can abide the awful scrutiny which shall be instituted at the last great day, "for which all other days were made," is a question of infinite importance, and most intimately concerns rational and accountable creatures. Amidst the

din of controversy, and the jarrings of adverse parties, the opinions of the head are often substituted for the virtues of the heart, and thus is practical religion most deplorably neglected. Fleeing, therefore, those pernicious disputes, which damp our devotion, and contract our benevolence, let us assiduously cultivate the means by which our faith may be invigorated, our hope enlivened, our charity confirmed, and our affections elevated to *the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God!* The veil now thrown over this preliminary state, and concealing from our view celestial objects, shall be speedily removed. Then bidding an adieu to prejudices which darken the understanding, irritate the temper, and deform the spirit, we shall embrace each other with perfect love, and shall be astonished at ourselves for having been on earth so addicted to unprofitable disputations, and so backward to the exercise of brotherly kindness, and of Christian charity.

Almighty God! look down on thine *erring* creatures. Pity their darkness and imperfection. Direct them into *the truth as it is in Jesus.* Banish from their hearts the bitterness of censure. Cherish in their minds a spirit of moderation and love towards their fellow Christians. To their zeal add knowledge, and to their knowledge charity. Make them patient and

humble under the difficulties which adhere to their faith, and under the perplexities which accompany their practice. *Guide them by thy counsel*, and, through the mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, *receive them into thy kingdom and glory*.—AMEN.

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